Re-visions:
Disordering perspectives of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

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Abstract

Suppose the informed reader of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were a woman. What difference might it make to posit a female reader for this work of literature? Might a woman reader offer an alternative to the kinds of perspectives employed in received readings of this text? Might a woman read this text differently?

The pluralism of feminist literary criticism offers the woman reader a variety of reading strategies and positions to enable her to make a difference to her reading. Rather than assenting to textual biases in which the male perspective is made central and the female perspective is marginalised, women are invited to reread, to resist, to revise, to re-appropriate and to disorder the dominant discourses of texts and their received readings. Rereading focal stories and the narratives that place them in context, this thesis engages these reading strategies to resist received readings of Pygmalion and his *puella*, to revise the rape of Philomela, and to re-appropriate Echo.

Theoretical models adduced here include the work of the French feminist writers Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, who identify Woman as a figure of indeterminacy and disorder, and a scientific model of chaos. Chaos theory challenges the notion that rules and formal systems of interpretation can be relied upon to interpret the dynamics of a complex system such as a literary text. It suggests that the linear perspectives assumed in traditional models of interpretation direct the reader towards the production of readings in which the structural and ideological complexities of a text are smoothed over.

Beginning, like the *Metamorphoses*, with chaos and disorder this thesis will attempt to progress towards stability and order. However, the readings and rereadings of transformation through which this progression will be effected will suggest that order is not a totalising or universalising condition, but is rather a pattern or state of symmetry in which asymmetries, gaps and unpredictabilities may occur. While emphasising the impossibility of an absolute or final form of interpretation, it will offer an alternative to the kinds of linear perspectives conventionally employed to read and interpret the complex dynamics of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. While seeking to map patterns and connections, causes and effects, it will take into account unpredictability and indeterminacy, plurality and contingency to read the *Metamorphoses* within an interpretative frame which views contradiction, discontinuity and variation not as sources of critical and textual weakness, but as sources of *jouissance*.

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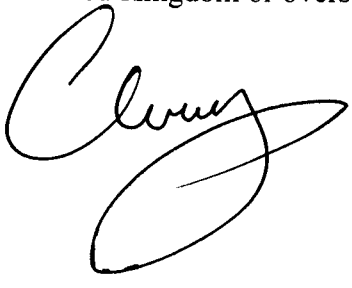
Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

This dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Signed: 

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Chaos (theory) I : Naso and Cleopatra's nose

ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum
unus erat toto naturae uultus in orbe,
quam dixere chaos.
Met 1.5-7

He who will know fully the vanity of man has only to consider the causes and effects of love. The cause is a 'je ne sais quoi', and the effects are dreadful. This 'je ne sais quoi', so small an object that we cannot recognise it, agitates a whole country, princes, armies, the entire world. Cleopatra's nose: had it been shorter, the whole aspect of the world would have been altered.
Blaise Pascal, *The Thoughts of Blaise Pascal*

The comments made by seventeenth century French physicist and mathematician Blaise Pascal upon the size of Cleopatra's nose can be construed as an anticipation of 'chaos theory'. The idea that a small variation (such as the size of Cleopatra's nose) in a complex system (such as world history) might have a dramatic and unpredictable effect upon the dynamics of that system has become, in the twentieth century, the basis of a scientific theory and a trope which bears potential and unpredictable significance for literary theorists and historians as well as for scientists and mathematicians.[1] Chaos, employed as a trope with which to examine texts and their readings rather than as a systematic scientific theory offers a way of thinking about the impossibilities of absolute or final forms of interpretation. While seeking to map patterns and connections, causes and effects,[2] chaos theory takes into account variation and influence, unpredictability and indeterminacy, plurality and contingency to offer an interpretative frame that is always open to new and unexpected possibilities. Within this frame, in which 'chaos' may be seen to operate as an ordering and disordering trope, variation and

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[1] For an over-view of the influence of the trope of chaos and of chaos theory on both literary theory and science see Hayles 1990 and 1991. Chaos theory challenges the notion that reliable equations can always be drawn between causes and their effects. It suggests that the perspectives assumed in such models of causality are inadequate to describe and account for the complex contexts in which systems of cause and effect operate. Chaos theory is often represented as a theory applicable only to random or non-linear systems. However, Stanislaw Ulam (quoted in Gleick 1987, 68) suggests that regarding chaos theory as 'the study of non-linear systems is like calling zoology the study of nonelephant animals'. The differences and similarities between the linearity of narrative systems and the linearity of physical systems described by Gleick and Ulam suggest that linearity may be a feature within a (narrative) system without being the organising principle of the whole.

[2] For example, chaos theory has offered convincing interpretations to explain the 'random' patterning and fractal structures of natural phenomena such as snowflakes and crystals. Cf. Gleick 1987, and Smith 1998.

indeterminacy are not viewed as 'problems' to be resolved in order for interpretation to be made possible. Instead, they are seen to offer possibilities for interpretation themselves.

Is it possible that the principles of such an interpretative frame might be used to interpret the dynamics of a complex 'system' such as the response to a literary text?[3] It is claimed that some texts appear to respond well to readings from a critical perspective that is influenced by chaos theory, particularly those texts in which 'the self emerges through indeterminate and discontinuous gaps in the narrative' or those which 'illustrate themselves a fractal nature, appearing fragmented on one level but revealing recursive patterns of symmetry on another'.[4]

It is suggested that chaos theory offers readers of literary texts a new way to approach order and interpretation. Chaos theory offers a way of viewing order not as a totalising or universalising condition, but as a pattern or state of symmetry in which asymmetries, gaps and unpredictabilities may occur. Within chaos theory, disordered or chaotic systems are seen to encode and enclose systems of order within themselves. Chaos theory offers a new approach to interpretation as a process which can re-negotiate unity and plurality, determinacy and indeterminacy, recognising both positions without privileging one over the other, and without attempting to assimilate one into the other. It represents a system in which traditional emphases and priorities are subverted, and in which contradiction, discontinuity and variation are viewed positively, as elements to be enjoyed rather than problems to be resolved. Indeed, chaos theory 'itself' should perhaps be regarded as a chaotic system, the ordering and disordering trope which it employs often subverting and challenging its own emphases and priorities.

In this subversion of traditional emphases and priorities, chaos theory appears to offer readers of literary texts an approach towards order and interpretation that is not unlike the approaches offered by post-modern literary criticism. According to

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[3] A number of the reading models offered by contemporary literary criticism - structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstructionism, psychoanalysis, linguistics, etc - are presented as scientific systems: particularly those influenced by French theoretical models and theorists working with and within a broader scientific framework. Elaine Showalter 1986, 140, claims that these 'new sciences of the text' seek to represent reading as a subject 'as manly and aggressive as nuclear physics'.

[4] Cf. Morrell 1996, for an analysis of the *Iliad* influenced by chaos theory.

Katherine Hayles, it is the recognition that texts are unpredictable and chaotic systems that distinguishes contemporary literary criticism from its predecessors.[5]

> The (old) New Critics had taken for granted that a literary work was a verbal object, bounded and finite, however ambiguous it might be within. But the (new) New Critics saw textual boundaries as arbitrary constructions whose configurations depended on who was reading, and why. As books became texts, they were transformed from ordered sets of words to permeable membranes through which flowed the currents of history, language and culture. Always already lacking a ground for their systems of signification, texts were not deterministic or predictable. Instead they were capable of becoming unstable whenever the slightest perturbation was introduced. The well-wrought urn, it seemed, was actually a reservoir of chaos.

While Hayles' account of this critical paradigm-shift emphasises some features of contemporary literary criticism at the expense of others, mapping discontinuity and disruption rather than continuity and development to pattern a symmetry between chaos theory and literary theory, this analysis may be seen to highlight the chaotic features that seem to characterise contemporary theories of texts, readers and reading. In particular, Hayles emphasises the mutability of texts, their potential to change and to be changed. Her analysis draws attention to the indeterminacy and instability of the systems of signification (employed in the processes of both writing and reading) within which literary texts are produced, and - perhaps most significantly - to the ways in which literary texts may be shaped by their readers. For in this analysis, readers appear to act in the mode of 'strange attractors', agents of influence which in chaos theory are considered to prompt the small variations which transform the dynamics of an ordered system. It is readers who appear to destabilise texts through their introduction of small variations into the process of reading: variations which could be seen to arise from

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[5] Hayles 1990, 2. Hayles claims further that, in emphasising the impossibilities of assimilating or polarising order and disorder, chaos theory demonstrates a particular affinity with post-structuralism. Like post-structuralism, chaos theory destabilises symmetries and oppositions, representing a new theoretical perspective in which 'the structuralist penchant for replicating symmetries is modified by the post-modern turn towards fragmentation, rupture and discontinuity'. Hayles 1991, 10-11. Hawkins 1995, 15, sees chaos theory as a product of and for the late twentieth century: 'In a time of collapsing explanatory and ideological paradigms and certainties, a theory which stresses built-in unpredictabilities seems both necessary and congenial to a post-Newtonian, post-Freudian, post-Marxist and post-modern world-view.' To this belated world-view might also be added post-feminism and post-structuralism.

the instability and unpredictability of readers themselves, through whom 'the currents of history, language, and culture' flow as through texts.[6]

Although, from Hayles' perspective all literary texts are potentially chaotic systems susceptible to disturbance by unpredictable readers, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, with its discontinuous and fragmented narrative, might be seen as a particularly appropriate, non-linear and chaotic text to view from within the interpretative frame offered by chaos theory. A well-wrought urn that serves as a container of chaos, this *carmen perpetuum* composed of discontinuous and fragmented narratives begins in cosmic chaos and disorder (*Met.* 1.5-7) and ostensibly - or rhetorically - appears to move towards stability and order. Yet the stories of transformation through which this progression is effected suggest that flux is the only constant, chaos the only regulation - of both cosmos and narrative. In the *Metamorphoses*, it seems, *nulli sua forma manebat.*[7]

Like his literary predecessors, Ovid's Chaos is primordial, his representation of the cosmos figures a world that is always already in a state of chaotic turbulence. Yet unlike the chaotic states represented by his literary predecessors, Ovid's Chaos is not represented negatively as void or as cosmic absence - as the 'gap' which Hesiod locates between heaven and earth. Ovid's Chaos does not merely represent the disordered condition of the cosmos before its regulation and order: Ovid's Chaos represents the pre-condition to that order. It is from chaotic disorder that the ordered cosmos will be configured. Thus, while other literary images of chaos are characterised by their vacuousness, Ovid's Chaos is characterised by its activity and turbulence. The Chaos of the *Metamorphoses* represents a state of continuous change in which *nulli sua forma manebat*: its constituent elements - earth, water and air - exist in a constant state of dynamic flux and its primary forces exist in a constant state of violent opposition.

> ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum
> unus erat toto naturae uultus in orbe,
> quem dixere chaos: rudis indigestaque moles

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[6] Hayles' own textual 'reservoir of chaos' is not immune to this variation, as the rereading of her work in *this* text illustrates.

[7] Cf. Brown 1987. Otis 1970, 94 comments upon Ovid's emphasis on aboriginal chaos that 'obviously the proper way to begin a universal epic of this sort was with the Hesiodic chaos'. However, Ovid's Chaos is unlike that of Hesiod or his successors in its violent turbulence. On the Hesiodic Chaos, cf. Vernant 1990. For classical representations of Chaos in the Hesiodic model cf. Hesiod *Theogony*, Apollonius Rhodius 1.496-48; Diodorus Siculus 1.7; Aristophanes *Birds* 693-94.

Chaos

nec quicquam nisi pondus iners congestaque eodem
non bene iunctarum discordia semina rerum.
nullus adhuc mundo praebebat lumina Titan,
nec noua crescendo reparabat cornua Phoebe,
nec circumfuso pendebat in aere tellus
ponderibus librata suis, nec bracchia longo
margine terrarum porrexerat Amphitrite;
utque erat et tellus illic et pontus et aer,
sic erat instabilis tellus, innabilis unda,
lucis egens aer; nulli sua forma manebat,
obstabatque aliis aliud, quia corpore in uno
frigida pugnabant calidis, umentia siccis,
mollia cum duris, sine pondere, habentia pondus.

Before there was sea and earth and sky to cover all
there was one face of nature in the whole world,
which is called chaos: a rough and disordered mass,
nothing but lifeless substance and crowded together
the turbulent seeds of incompatible elements.
As yet, the light of the sun did not shine upon the earth,
nor did the waxing moon recover her new crescent,
nor did the earth hang in the surrounding air
balanced by its own weight, nor had the ocean
stretched her arms around the far margins of the earth;
although there was earth and sea and air,
the land was unstable, the water unswimable,
the air lacked light; nothing retained its own form,
everything opposed everything else, for in one body
cold fought with hot, wet with dry,
soft with hard, those with weight with those without weight.[8]

*Met.*1.5-20

[8] This translation is not presented as the only potential translation for this passage: here, as elsewhere, I offer a provisional interpretation of a text from a specific perspective. In order for this woman to read the *Metamorphoses* - as a woman,and/or like a feminist - reading requires translation; translation forms the first stage in the recuperation and reappropriation of the text for my own purposes. Where translation would seem to impose closure upon a phrase or term that I would wish to keep 'open' (i.e *ars, natura, puella*) I have not always offered a translation.

Chaos

In the first transformation of the *Metamorphoses,* the cosmos is formed, according to Ovid, by the intervention of a figure of authority, a god or better nature (*Met.* 1.21 *hanc deus et melior litem natura diremit*), who imposes order and stability upon the primordial chaos by imposing limits and boundaries upon its conflicting elements, forming 'recursive patterns of symmetry' in separating and relocating earth, water and air (*Met.*1.32f *sic ubi dispositam quisquis fuit ille deorum / congeriem secuit sectamque in membra coegit,*) and in dividing the newly formed earth into zones reflecting those of the sky (*Met.*1.45-48 *utque duae dextra caelum totidemque sinistra / parte secant zonae, quinta est ardentior illis, / sic onus inclusum numero distinxit eodem / cura dei totidemque plagae tellure premuntur*).

However, the new order imposed upon the primordial chaos by this figure of authority - whoever he might be - is not absolute, and confusion - not only in relation to the identity of the creator - continues to exist.[9] Order is imposed upon the waters as they are separated into seas and springs, pools, lakes and rivers, (*Met.*1.36-42) but as in their former chaotic state, the waters do not maintain their distinction from the earth (*Met.*1.40 *partim sorbentur ab ipsa*), or from each other, as springs become rivers and as rivers flow into the sea (*Met.*1.42 *in mare perueniunt partim campoque recepta / liberioris aquae pro ripis litora pulsant.*) The air is similarly turbulent, with the continuing *discordia* of the winds threatening to tear apart the newly formed world (*Met.*1.58-60 *uix nunc obsistitur illis, /... / quin lanient mundum: tanta est discordia fratrum*).[10] Moreover, as the description of the new cosmos illustrates, earth, water and air continue to merge together and to take on each other's characteristics: fog and rain soaks the earth, and fills the 'liquid' air (*Met.*1.65-68). The newly formed cosmos appears to be stable and ordered but its elements are not. In 'essence' the cosmos is reconfigured chaos and, as such, may be seen to retain some of the chaotic features of its former state.

Within this reconfigured chaos some elements are more stable than others, and one of the most unpredictable elements of the ordered cosmos is humankind. Like Ovid's cosmos itself, inherently unstable from its origins and perhaps because of its origins, humankind in the *Metamorphoses* is a potentially chaotic creation - in part because of the nature of its creation. As in his ambiguous description of the

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[9] McKin 1984, 101 claims that the newly-formed cosmos is stable and ordered until the creation of mankind throws 'a monkey-wrench in the works of a rational cosmos'. However, the instability of the cosmos *ab initio*, before the creation of mankind, is evident in the narrative.

[10] The term *discordia* is also used to describe the turbulent conflict of the primordial chaos at *Met* 1.9.

creation of the cosmos, Ovid offers two alternative accounts of the creation of man.

> natus homo est, siue hunc diuino semine fecit
> ille opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo,
> siue recens tellus seductaque nuper ab alto
> aethere cognati retinebat semina caeli.
> quem satus Iapeto, mixtam pluuialibus undis,
> finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum ...

Man was born: either the maker of everything made him
from his own divine seed, planning a better world,
or the new earth, only recently drawn from the high
ether, retaining some elements of the related sky.
Which the son of Iapetus, mixed with running water,
made into the shape of the gods which moderate all ...

*Met.*1.78-83

These two alternative versions of the creation of man are significant. In both his creation is related in some way to the gods; he is either formed in the image of the all moderating gods or from the semen/seed[11] of the original moderating god, he who first ordered the primordial chaos. This emphasis upon the authority and moderating powers of the god(s) who '*litem ... diremit*' bears contradictory implications for their creation of man. It suggests that, being like the god(s), man may also possess authority and the power of moderation, but also, being part of the world which the god(s) must moderate and control, man may also possess the potential for unpredictability and instability.

The chaotic potential of the human race is highlighted in Ovid's second version of the creation of man, which is itself attributed greater emphasis in the narrative than the first. In this version man is formed from a mixture of the very elements - earth, air and water - that previously composed the primordial chaos, and which even in the newly ordered cosmos display 'chaotic' patterns of behaviour. This

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[11] The same term, *semina/semine* (recalling Lucretius' atomic *semina rerum* in the *DRN* and the *discordia semina rerum* at *Met.* 1.9) is used to describe the elemental creation of man in both accounts.

connection is confirmed by the allusions in the narrative to the *recens tellus* only *seducta nuper* from the air and still retaining some elements of its *cognati caeli* (*Met.*1.80f). The chaotic elements which were separated and re-configured in order to form the cosmos are mixed again in order to form man. Chaos is configured again, with mankind as the new location of indeterminacy, turbulence and transformation.

Stability and order in Ovid's cosmos, then, are only ever provisional, and the potential for such order to disintegrate into disordered chaos is ever present. In this respect, an interesting dynamic emerges between the divine figure of authority - the *fabricator* (*Met.*1.57) or *opifex* (*Met.*1.79) - responsible for imposing initial order upon the primordial chaos in the creation of the cosmos, and the other divine figures of authority responsible for re-introducing disorder into the world as the agents of metamorphosis.[12] For although the gods in the *Metamorphoses* are frequently represented as being directly responsible for the transformations of human subjects, thereby disrupting the stability of the cosmos, it is the preservation of stability and order that is presented as their motivation for these transformations. Thus, human characters who challenge the *status quo* and threaten disorder by transgressing the boundaries of permissible human behaviour (behaving like animals or consorting with gods) are punished in order to restore and maintain those boundaries. Order and stability, it appears, depend upon elements of disorder and chaos.

The patterned disorder of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* both encourages and frustrates critical efforts to impose structural or ideological order upon it. Attempts to describe and define its patterns and symmetry highlight its complex and fractal structure. Yet, linear perspectives privileging 'logic' and symmetry are commonly brought to bear upon individual narratives within the *Metamorphoses*, with the ostensible aim of establishing meaning by establishing coherence. Michaela Janan adopts such an 'ordering' view in her reading of the song of Orpheus:[13]

> His [Orpheus'] imaginative explorations allow him to re-configure the elements of his history according to associative logic. This logic is

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[12] A dynamic which might also be seen to engage the *fabricator* or *opifex* of the *Metamorphoses*, the authorial figure responsible for imposing order upon his *opus*, but who may yet be considered responsible for similarly re-introducing elements of disorder. Both *fabricatores*, it could be suggested, contrive to produce an 'image' of order and stability which is undermined by the chaotic elements present in their work.

[13] Janan 1988, 112. An alternative reading of this narrative is offered in chapter one.

> governed by parallels between the conceptual bases for identity, authority and language. We must understand precisely what these parallels are and how they work in order to understand the precise shape of Orpheus' narrative - to understand why, for example, he portrays chaos in one realm as having repercussions in others, as if identity, *auctoritas* and language functioned interdependently.

Janan assumes, not entirely illogically, that the application of logic is the best way to order Orpheus' complex narrative and to so appreciate its meaning. She assumes that the re-configuration of the chaotic elements of Orpheus' story can be better understood by mapping the parallels and elements of symmetry that shape it. Her subsequent reading of the story privileges unity and continuity as she patterns her interpretation of the narrative in relation to its own patterns of identity, authority and language. Her reading is persuasive and 'logical' but its emphasis upon 'precision' denies the narrative any element of ambiguity or indeterminacy, concealing the potentially illogical or contradictory perspectives presented by the complex focalization of this embedded narrative.[14]

Attempts to describe and define the thematic and structural unity of the *Metamorphoses* similarly serve to emphasise the discontinuity and fragmentation of its narrative(s).[15] Thus, the oft cited criticism made by Quintilian upon the various devices and strategies of connection and transition employed by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* serves to draw attention to the extent to which the continuity and unity of the text is both ordered and disrupted by these devices:[16]

> illa vero frigida et puerilis est in scholis adfectatio, ut ipse transitus efficiat aliquam utique sententiam et huius uelut praestigiae plausum petat, ut Ouidius lasciuire in Metamorphosesi solet, quem tamen excusare necessitas potest, res diuersissimas in speciem unius corporis colligentem.
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> There is that unattractive and puerile affectation in rhetorical schools, to make a connection itself something and to seek applause for this as though

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[14] Cf. Cahoon 1996, 63. Cahoon suggests that: 'Ovid's use of numerous internal narrators in asymmetrical configurations notoriously dislodges the relative stability and gravity of more traditional epic narratives. Moreover, by drawing attention to the personal motives and political constraints of particular narrators, Ovid demystifies fantasies about artistic inspiration and creativity; we see the surrounding circumstances of artistic production.'

[15] Solodow 1988, 9-36, offers a fine illstration of 'just how endemic schematizing is to critical reading of the *Metamorphoses*.'

[16] *Inst.Or.*4.1.77

> for a conjuring trick. So Ovid tends to play in the *Metamorphoses*, but he may be excused by the necessity to draw together the most diverse elements into the appearance of a unity.

Other critics since Quintilian have attempted to justify and define the unifying features of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but their attempts too have drawn attention to the discontinuity and fragmentation of the text, rather than to its unity. Stephens'[17] claim that the unifying principle of the text is 'Love', brings to mind all of the episodes and themes which have nothing to do with love, at the same time as it raises critical questions relating to the nature or definition of 'love' in the *Metamorphoses*.[18] It reminds us that the *Metamorphoses* is and is not about 'Love'. Buchheit[19] equates the cosmology of the *Metamorphoses* with the politics and history of Rome to claim that the unifying principle of the text is the relation between *cosmos* and *imperium*. His claim brings to mind the vast majority of episodes and themes which have nothing to do with Rome or its politics:[20] it reminds us that the *Metamorphoses* is and is not about Love or Rome.

Schmidt[21] rather more persuasively asserts that the unifying principle of the *Metamorphoses* is not Love or Rome, but Man: a comprehensive category which could be seen to include both Stephens' and Buchheit's unifying principles, but which might also be seen to exclude women on the grounds of their difference from and within this universalising 'unit'.[22] The distinct lack of unity between these different accounts of unity within the *Metamorphoses* is particularly significant. Each one is based upon close critical readings of the text, each one clearly identifies a thematic pattern within that text, yet each one contradicts the others and offers little possibility of reconciliation or agreement. Their efforts to demonstrate the thematic unity of the *Metamorphoses*, and up emphasising instead its thematic disunity.

Attempts by Ludwig and Otis[23] to define the structural unity of the *Metamorphoses*, based upon more detailed analyses of the text, similarly succeed in highlighting instead its apparent lack of structural and thematic unity,

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17 Stephens 1989
18 Should 'amor' be understood in the same way that 'love' is understood - and understood by whom? Should episodes of rape be included in Stephen's wide-ranging category?
19 Buchheit 1966
20 Although, it might be argued that everything is (always already) political.
21 Schmidt 1991
22 Cf. Spender 1980, 138-190. This point is considered in more depth in chapter one.
23 Ludwig 1965, and Otis 1970

emphasising its narrative fragmentation. Once more, it is significant that their readings, which each identify a clear structural pattern within the text, contradict each other. The parallels and symmetries that they each locate in the *Metamorphoses* find no parallelism in each other's structural plans. Ludwig identifies 'Time' as the unifying principle for his structural analysis of the text, dividing the narrative into chronologically ordered sections located in prehistory (*Met.*1.5-1.451), mythical time (*Met.*1.452-11.193), and historical time (*Met.*11.194-15.870). Within each section, Ludwig further divides the narrative into a series of frames in which key prehistorical, mythological, or historical figures predominate.

Like Ludwig, Otis tries hard to determine 'the plan of Ovid's epic', constructing 21 different plans and maps to detail the complex but symmetrical structure of the poem. He argues that this form of structural analysis 'provides the element of stability against which both the necessary variety and, above all, the unceasing process of motif transformation can be set in relief and given some semblance of continuity'.[24] He divides the text into four principal sections on ostensibly common themes such as 'Divine Amor' (*Met.*1.5-2.875), 'Vengeance' (*Met.*3.1-6.400), 'Amatory Pathos' (*Met.*6.401-11.795), and 'Troy and Rome' (*Met.*12.1-15.870).

Both Ludwig and Otis base their structural organisations of the *Metamorphoses* upon a patterned symmetry formed of different key units.[25] Both highlight some episodes, characters and themes at the expense of others, supressing some elements of the text in order to emphasise others, and both structural analyses necessarily involve various elisions and omissions of episodes, characters and themes that cannot be made to fit into the over-all structure. Yet it is these elisions and omissions, these silences and gaps, which disrupt the symmetry and unity of the (dis)ordered structures which both Ludwig and Otis define. As Solodow observes:[26] 'each of these principles of organization ... is in its execution somewhat askew or incomplete, neglected or violated. The drive to unity is nearly matched by the force working in the opposite direction.' These linear models and

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[24] Otis 1970, 86

[25] For a figured comparison of Ludwig and Otis' different analyses of the same section of the *Metamorphoses* (*Met.*3.1-6.400) cf. Solodow 1988, 12f. Solodow observes:'The remarkable lack of agreement among the analyses points to the poem's extraordinary productiveness of structures. It abounds in parallels and contrasts, symmetries and variations, with links of every sort, thematic as well as formal.'

[26] Solodow 1988, 25

plans do not suggest that 'the basic principle of structure here is that of symmetrical correspondence',[27] they suggest rather that the basic principle of structure here in the *Metamorphoses* is chaos.

Solodow, however, attempts to impose his own order upon that chaotic or opposing force which frustrated Ludwig and Otis. His own organising and unifying principle for the *Metamorphoses* is that of metamorphosis:[28]

> Structural analyses like those of Ludwig and Otis, which rely of course on abstraction, run aground on the uncapturable exuberance and variety of the poem. Several more concrete, recurring features give greater promise of indicating where the poem's unity lies and are more likely to point us towards the book's central concerns. Let us start with the most obvious, which gives the book its title: the diverse stories are linked by the fact that each includes a metamorphosis. Ovid announces his subject in the very first words of the poem ... All told, about two hundred fifty metamorphoses are narrated or mentioned. This strikes me as not only the most obvious but also the most important unifying feature of the poem.

However, Solodow's own theory of unification is subject to the same disruption and disorder as that effected by the elisions and omissions in the models of thematic and structural unity whose execution he himself identifies as 'incomplete, neglected or violated'. For, as Solodow himself admits, not every story or episode in the *Metamorphoses* concludes with or even includes a metamorphosis. Orpheus for example, although a central figure whose song offers many instances of transformation, is torn apart by Thracian maenads and experiences no physical metamorphosis himself - although it could be argued that he experiences a transformation in character, sexuality and poetic form.

Similarly, in the story of Echo and Narcissus, metamorphosis is presented as merely incidental to the fate of both characters: Echo wastes away and her bones turn to stone, but her voice (and thus Echo herself) lives on in the same form, while Narcissus too wastes away, and after his death, a flower is found growing in

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[27] ibid, 85

[28] Solodow 1988, 14f. Later in the chapter, however, (1988, 36) Solodow appears to revise this view of metamorphosis as the unifying principle of the *Metamorphoses* and claims instead that 'the structures implied and undone in the *Metamorphoses* amount to a commentry on story telling and, with it, on mythology and literature.' The unifying theme of the *Metamorphoses* may not be metamorphosis but may instead be 'story-telling'.

place of his body (*Met.*3.509) - an apparent substitution of *flos* for *corpus*, rather than a direct metamorphosis of *corpus* to *flos*.[29] Similarly, in the story of Philomela, Procne and Tereus, the metamorphosis of the central characters is simply represented as incidental to the focal narrative and receives only brief attention at the conclusion of the episode (*Met.*6.667-674). In other accounts of metamorphosis, such as the transformation of the wolfish Lycaon into a wolf, it might be suggested that metamorphosis serves as a marker of continuity and stability no less than of change, further destabilising Solodow's analysis.

Thus, another attempt to map structural and thematic order upon the patterned disorder of the *Metamorphoses* is frustrated, Solodow's attempts to describe and define its unity, like those Ludwig, Otis *et al*, highlighting the text's disunity and its ordered chaos. It seems that Altieri's unifying principle of flux - another trope for chaos perhaps - comes closest to offering a (dis)ordering structure for this chaotic text. He suggests that the idea of flux as a mode of structural and thematic 'order' warns us against the possibility of identifying consistently coherent patterns and symmetries:[30] 'the theme of flux, ... by its very nature asserts both the absence of all informing structures or principles of form and the equality of all present moments.' The idea of chaos, however, encourages us to try. Indeed, Hawkins suggests that such attempts to impose order upon a text like the *Metamorphoses* may be seen to confirm its 'chaotic' status:[31]

> the signature of a complex non-linear work of art may be that it not only inspires diverse imitations and dialectically opposite critical interpretations but, in effect, elicits successive artistic and critical efforts to smooth out and impose order (either ideologically, or morally, or structurally) on its structurally, ideologically and morally chaotic components.

Such analyses, emphasising only unity and coherence, fail to recognise that part of a text's dynamism may be seen to depend upon not upon the order and consistency of its structures and themes, but upon its gaps and inconsistencies, its silences and contradictions. Terry Eagleton, in Machereyan mode, illustrates that it is the disunity of a text which enables the critic to assess its significance:[32]

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[29] Cf. Brenkman 1976, 308-310
[30] Altieri 1973, ??xxx
[31] Hawkins 1995, 5
[32] Eagleton 1976, 34

> It is in the significant *silences* of a text, in its gaps and absences that the presence of ideology can be most positively felt. It is these silences which the critic must make 'speak'. The text is, as it were, ideologically forbidden to say certain things; in trying to tell the truth in his own way, for example, the author finds himself forced to reveal the limits of the ideology within which he writes. He is forced to reveal its gaps and silences, what it is unable to articulate. Because a text contains these gaps and silences, it is always *incomplete*. Far from constituting a rounded, coherent whole, it displays a conflict and contradiction of meanings; and the significance of the work lies in the difference rather than unity between these meanings.

Beginning, like the *Metamorphoses*, with chaos and disorder this thesis will attempt to progress towards stability and order. However, the readings and rereadings of transformation through which this progression will be effected will suggest that order is not a totalising or universalising condition, but is rather a pattern or state of symmetry in which asymmetries, gaps and unpredictabilities may occur. While emphasising the impossibility of an absolute or final form of interpretation, the following analysis will offer an alternative to the kinds of linear perspectives conventionally employed to read and interpret the complex dynamics of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. While seeking to map patterns and connections, causes and effects, it will take into account unpredictability and indeterminacy, plurality and contingency to read the *Metamorphoses* within an interpretative frame which views contradiction, discontinuity and variation not as sources of critical and textual weakness, but as sources of *jouissance*.

Chaos (theory) II: Critical (dis)orientation

Language no longer guarantees identity, or meaning: all figuration is chaotic, disorganised and non-transparent. (And this collapse of simple referentiality renders it impossible to formulate a feminist politics based on experience.) Out of the chaos resulting from the collapse of the master-narratives a new space is produced.
Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore, *The Feminist Reader*

Each reader tells a story. There is no neutral, no clean position from which to read.
Simon Goldhill, *The Poet's Voice*

... the female
Is an element, the female
Is a chaos.
Ezra Pound, *Canto XXIX*

Reading chaos

Chaos theory as a trope challenges the notion that rules and formal systems of interpretation can be relied upon to interpret the dynamics of a complex system such as a literary text. It suggests that the linear perspectives assumed in such models of interpretation direct the reader towards the production of readings in which the structural and ideological complexities of a text are smoothed over. From these perspectives, the text and its readings may be presented as both unified and coherent, configuring a reading experience which may be repeated and reiterated in order to promote further the perception of a text's structural and ideological stability.[33] Peter Rabinowitz adopts such a perspective in his analysis of the complexities of the reading experience.[34] He claims that there are and must be 'rules of reading' emphasising signification, configuration and coherence, if the reader is to read a text appropriately - that is, if the reader is 'to read a text as the author wished'. Rabinowitz draws a clear parallel between the way in which a reader reads and the reading produced. He suggests that the application of the right reading mode to the right text will produce the right reading.

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[33] From this perspective 'classic' texts bear immutable and trans-historic meaning, and canons containing such texts are universally valid.
[34] Rabinowitz 1986, 120-22

Like texts, however, readers may seem to be complex systems. A text, by ordering the responses of an 'ideal reader' may potentially structure an 'ideal reading', but as Boardman suggests: 'the real or material reader does not necessarily follow all of the clues offered by the text, as her/his relationship to the text is mediated by a number of factors.'[35] The response of a 'real' or 'material' reader to a text is therefore unpredictable, subject to the influence of any number of variables. Like texts, readers may also display chaotic characteristics, and resist efforts to smooth-over any variation or discontinuity between them. Traditional theoretical models of readers and reading tend to map a linear parity of cause and effect between a 'type' of reader and a 'type' of reading experience: if a reader is a woman, it is argued, her experience as a woman will directly influence her reading experience. Yet attempts to describe and define the unity of readers, experiences of reading, and reading communities tend also to emphasise the discontinuity and fragmentation of readers and reading. A survey of just some of the different types of reader or reading position offered by the theorists of reader-response criticism illustrates this fragmentation and suggests that such structured attempts to order the chaotic principles of reading may themselves disintegrate into chaos.[36]

Readers, moreover, are subject to numerous small influences which make their responses to texts 'unpredictable'. The potential for any number of small variations to have effected the lives and reading experience(s) of any two ostensibly similar readers fundamentally destabilises the very idea of like-minded reading communities. Yet conventional or traditional theories about readers and reading describe a clear linear relationship between the reader and the experience of reading. A direct line of cause and effect is posited which equates a particular type of reader with a particular type of reading experience. Thus a post-structuralist reader is seen to read in a certain way, a feminist reader is seen to read in another

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[35] Boardman 1994, 201

[36] Thus, some of the principal models of readership include: the actual reader (Jauss); the embedded reader (Chambers); the encoded or inscribed reader (Brooke); the female or feminist reader (Schweickart, Flint); the gay or lesbian reader (Koestenbaum); the ideal reader (Culler); the implied reader (Booth, Iser); the informed reader (Fish); the Lacanian reader (Felman); the literant (Holland); the mock reader (Gibson); the model reader (Eco); the narratee (Prince); the passive reader (Poulet); the real reader (Prince); the resisting reader (Fetterley); the super-reader (Riffaterre); and the virtual reader (Prince). Other varieties of reader identified in critical accounts of the reading experience include: the colluding, discerning, dominant, gendered, linguistic, male, normative, pragmatic, renegade, surrogate, unfaithful, and woman reader. The range might be expanded still further to include the 'rapid reader' for whom, Otis claims, 'Ovid designed his carmen perpetuum' (Otis 1970, 169), and the 'sophisticated reader' for whom, Knox claims, Ovid also wrote (Knox 1986, 61). Cf. general surveys of reader-response criticism in Bennett 1995, Mills 1994, Tompkins 1980.

way, and a woman reader in yet another. Stanley Fish's 'interpretative communities' of 'like-minded readers' are divided and defined in this way[37], and although different group-types are identified, the smallest variation within these groups causes their fragmentation into smaller units. The male black gay feminist with Marxist sympathies who reads (sometimes) as a post-structuralist causes chaos to Fish's complex system.

The weaknesses and inadequacies of this system are highlighted in Jonathan Culler's analysis of the Fishian model of reading. Culler suggests that when Fish reports even his own experience of reading, his report does not offer a straightforward account of Fish's direct reading experience but rather an account of Fish reading as 'Fish' - or as a Fishian reader. For Culler, reading involves an act of mimesis or role-playing, and the reader is never identical with the person reading. He claims that:[38]

> there are reasons to doubt whether one can take for granted the unity and identity of one's reading strategies and experiences. If even Fish reading does not coincide with the Fishian reader, the problems are quite severe and suggest that reading is divided and heterogeneous, useful as a point of reference only when composed into a story, when construed or constructed as a narrative.

Some stories or narratives about reading do not 'take for granted the unity and identity of one's reading strategies and experiences'; some emphasise instead the plurality and heterogeneity of readers and reading. So, Norman Holland claims that individuals negotiate the experience of reading literary texts as individuals in much the same way as they negotiate other experiences. According to Holland, 'interpretation is a function of identity' and when readers interpret texts they are influenced by an individual 'identity theme' which shapes their view of the world as well as their reading perspective.[39] While this theory emphasises the potentially unpredictable and random differences between readers and their individually coded reading experiences, the variation within and between readers may,

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[37] Cf. Fish 1980, 15.

[38] Culler 1983, 68 - 69. Culler's anaylsis of the act of reading as an act of mimesis is not unlike Gibson's notion of the 'mock reader' who is invited by the text to adopt a particular persona and to play a particular role in relation to it. Cf. Gibson 1980, also Martindale 1993, 15-7

[39] Holland 1980, 123. For Walter Michaels, the reverse of Holland's maxim is also true, and identity is also a function of interpretation. The influence of these theories is evident in Culler's account of 'Reading as a woman' (Culler 1982, 43-64) in which he emphasises the 'constructedness' of a woman's identity both as a woman and as a reader.

nevertheless, be ordered. Within this chaotic system of readers and reading, patterns of symmetry may be configured: women, sharing some common experiences which are not shared by men, may seem to read alike *at some level*; men, sharing some common experiences which are not shared by women, may similarly seem to read alike *at some level*. Within chaotic systems, patterns can always be determined *at some level*, but direct connections between cause and effect need not be posited.

Feminist literary theorists have been particularly keen to promote the pluralism of readers and reading and to highlight the different experiences of male and female readers. However, their emphasis upon the differences between male and female readers has not always taken into account the differences among different male or female readers, highlighting heterogeneity at one level but assuming homogeneity at another. According to Mary Jacobus, the assumption that men and women might read differently 'creates an illusory wholeness or identity, denying the internal division which simultaneously produces the gendered subject and the reading subject'.[40] Within a context that ostensibly challenges the hypothesis of universal or unified readers and reading experiences, some analyses of gender and reading appeal to notions of a universal and unified 'Woman reader', smoothing over the potential disunity and fragmentation of the individual elements of that ordered construct.

The model of chaos theory demonstrates that it is possible to map the patterns and connections suggested by the hypothesis of a gendered reading experience, but also confirms that it is necessary to take into account the possibility of variation and plurality within those patterns. Annette Kolodny, writing in 1980, appears to have anticipated the central features of chaos theory in her account of the influence of pluralism upon feminist literary theory and upon the future of literary criticism.[41]

> The very idea of pluralism seems to threaten a kind of chaos for the future of literary inquiry ... And if feminists openly acknowledge

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[40] Jacobus 1986, 5

[41] Kolodny 1980, 161. Although chaos theory itself warns against the determination of origins (systems are always already chaotic) the key principles of chaos theory or chaotics were not ostensibly 'formalised' until 1987 with the publication of Gleick's ground-breaking work. Indeed, evident even in this early work by Gleick are signs of the disordering effects of chaos and chaos theory, as Gleick re-formulates his approach to chaos theory in the very process of its formulation: *nulli sua forma manebat.*

> ourselves as pluralists, then we do not give up the search for patterns of opposition and connection - probably, the basis of thinking itself; what we give up is simply the arrogance of claiming that our work is either exhaustive or definitive.

To posit a reading experience as the definitive reading experience of *the* reader, male or female, is to privilege unity and symmetry at the expense of plurality and variation. It is deny the complexity and dynamism of reading experiences and the experiences of individual readers. It is to attempt to impose order and stability upon chaos.

Reading like a woman

Jonathan Culler introduces his influential analysis of feminist literary criticism – 'Reading as a Woman' – with this hypothesis: 'Suppose the informed reader of a work of literature is a woman.' He asks if this might not make a difference to the reader's experience of that text; if gender difference might not make a difference to reading.[42] Now suppose we adopt this hypothesis for the *Metamorphoses.* Might it not make a difference to posit a woman reader of this work of literature? Might a woman reader offer an alternative to the kinds of linear perspectives conventionally employed to read and interpret this text? Might a woman read this text differently?

She might. French feminists associate the woman reader with femininity and in turn associate femininity - whether 'femininity' is perceived as a position (Kristeva), a space (Cixous), or an essence (Irigaray) - with difference.[43] They associate Woman with unpredictability and indeterminacy, with plurality and with chaos.[44] One of the common motifs in their very different theories of gender difference is the idea that masculinity represents 'reason, order, unity and lucidity' while femininity represents 'irrationality, chaos and fragmentation'.[45] Indeed, chaotic and unpredictable behaviour and 'non-linear thinking' have traditionally been associated with the feminine and have been seen to challenge the rationality and order of 'phallologocentrism'.[46]

Thus, Toril Moi claims that, 'from a phallocentric point of view' women may be seen 'to represent the necessary frontier between men and chaos, but because of their very marginality they will also always seem to recede into and merge with

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[42] Culler 1982, 43. For re-readings of Culler cf. in particular Showalter 1987 and Scholes 1987.
[43] Cf. Haraway 1986, 400: 'The French Feminists ... for all their differences, know how to write the body, how to weave eroticism, cosmology, and politics from imagery of embodiment, ... from imagery of fragmentation and reconstitution of bodies.' Haraway's analysis may be seen to illustrate one of the reason's why the French Feminists offer particularly appropriate theoretical perspectives from which to read the *Metamorphoses.*
[44] As in the classical literary tradition, in which women are commonly associated with chaos and disorder. The list of female figures responsible for instigating disruption is potentially great but might include Pandora, Helen, Dido and Cleopatra.
[45] Cf. Moi 1989, 131.
[46] Cf. Hayles 1990, 171-4. Hayles observes that, despite the cultural encoding of chaos and unpredictability as feminine, few women work in this area, and female figures are significantly absent from works on chaos theory. She notes that, with the exception of a few 'anonymous "wives" who accompany their scientist-husbands', Gleick's narrative history of chaos (Gleick 1987) 'has no women in it. Hundreds of men are mentioned by name; some dozen are depicted in enough detail so that one almost feels one knows them. But no women, or virtually none, appear.'

the chaos of the outside.'[47] Culler suggests that, particularly in the writing of French feminists: ''woman' has come to stand for any radical force that subverts the concepts, assumptions, and structures of traditional male discourse.'[48] Similarly, Kaja Silverman describes the female subject as a 'potentially subversive' force, a disordering agent in the (phallologocentric) symbolic order.[49] Chaos, it seems, is a woman.

However, Culler's hypothetical reader is not only a 'woman', she is also an 'informed reader', and the informed readers of a text, whether male or female, are assumed to be able to read alike at some fundamental or essential level. Stanley Fish's model of the 'informed reader' - a model formed very much in his own image - describes such a reader as 'neither an abstraction, nor an actual living reader, but a hybrid - a real reader (me) who does everything within his power to make himself informed.' By suppressing the personal and the idiosyncratic, Fish claims that, 'Each of us, if we are sufficiently responsible and self-conscious, can, in the course of applying the method, become the informed reader.'[50] In this context Fish appears to identify a reader's gender with the personal and idiosyncratic that should be suppressed, and he seems to suggest that gender difference should not make a difference to the reader who seeks to become an informed reader.[51]

But texts such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* may seem to identify men and women – masculinity and femininity – emphatically in terms of difference, this difference being ordered as hierarchy and the male privileged over the female. As informed readers of such texts, women are thus faced with a double bind: as readers they are asked to adopt a masculine perspective, while as women they are excluded from the masculine experience determined by such a perspective. Feminist critic Elaine Showalter condemns the claims of comprehensiveness and neutrality made by and for the informed readers of 'classic' texts. She claims that: 'Women are estranged from their own experience and unable to perceive its shape and authenticity ... they are expected to identify as readers with a masculine experience and identity,

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[47] Moi 1989, 127
[48] Culler 1982, 61
[49] Silverman 1983, 233
[50] Fish 1980, 49, cited in Culler 1982, 40f. As a 'real' reader, Fish's informed reader is thus a very different figure to the 'ideal' reader imagined by Wolfgang Iser as a text's 'implied reader'. Cf. Iser 1978, 36. On the tendency of reader-response theorists to separate the theoretical (implied, ideal, etc.) reader from the real reader cf. Allen 1987, and Benton *et al* 1988.
[51] For Fish, 'gender' in this analysis seems to be synonymous with 'female'. Being 'female', then, should not make a difference to the reader who seeks to become an informed reader by suppressing her femininity.

which is presented as the human one.'[52] Asked to read as men, they are, at the same time, reminded that women are not as men: their identity, their perspective, and their experience is represented differently.

This double bind makes of the woman reader an excluded mimic: miming the reading position and perspective of a man while maintaining her distance from the experience and the identity that excludes her. The woman reader then, plays a role. She reads not *as* but *like* a man. However, the relationship between the natural and the artificial suggested by this distinction is problematised by the notion that reading itself, no less than gender, is a form of mimesis: an act that is performed rather than an activity that is natural.[53] As Annette Kolodny has suggested, reading is not a 'natural' activity, but rather 'reading is a *learned* activity which, like so many other learned interpretative strategies in our society, is inevitably sex-coded and gender-inflected.'[54]

'Reading as a woman' may therefore be perceived not as a natural activity but as an act of mimesis. A woman reading may seem to play a role, to read not *as* a woman – according to some given essence of femininity that defines her identity and her experience as a woman reader – but *like* a woman – adopting the posture of a woman reader. And although this posture may be subjectively constructed with reference to her identity and experience as a woman, it is nevertheless, an artificially assumed position determined by the woman reader herself. As Culler suggests:

> 'For a woman to read as a woman is not to repeat an identity or an experience that is given but to play a role she constructs with reference to her identity as a woman, which is also a construct, so that the series can continue: a woman reading as a woman reading as a woman. The noncoincidence reveals an interval, a division within woman or within any reading subject and the "experience" of that subject.' [55]

Culler's focus upon the 'division' or fracture between a reader's experience and her experience as a reader is significant, not least of all because it draws attention to the problematic assumption of an 'authority of experience' that is often posited in

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[52] Showalter 1971, 856, cited in Fetterley 1978, xxi
[53] For feminist theories of reading cf: Fetterley 1978; Flynn and Schweikart 1986; Fuss 1989; Greene and Kahn 1985; Mills 1994; and Rabinowitz and Richlin 1993.
[54] Kolodny 1980, 588
[55] Culler 1982, 64

feminist accounts of reading. It is assumed that there exists 'an unbroken continuity between "life" and "text" - a mimetic relation whereby women's writing, reading or culture, instead of being produced, reflect a knowable reality'.[56] Diana Fuss, arguing against the unacknowledged essentialist agenda of feminist accounts of a female 'authority of experience', warns that:[57]

> Bodily experiences may seem self-evident and immediately perceptible but they are always socially mediated. Even if we were to agree that experience is not merely constructed but also constructing, we would still have to acknowledge that there is little agreement amongst women on exactly what constitutes 'a woman's experience', therefore we need to be extremely wary of the temptation to make substantive claims on the basis of the so-called 'authority' of our experiences.

Critics of Culler claim that although there may not be a direct and unbroken connection between a reader's lived experience and the experience of a text, some form of continuity between 'life' and 'text' may be observed. Thus, they resist his assertion that it is impossible to read *as*, but only *like*, a woman. Tania Modleski asserts that 'a genuinely feminist literary criticism might wish to repudiate the *hypothesis* of a woman reader and instead promote the 'sensible', visible, actual female reader.'[58]; although it is not clear from her analysis who or what a 'genuine' feminist literary criticism or an 'actual' female reader might be - or, indeed, how the 'playful' rather than the 'sensible' female reader might read. Elaine Showalter suggests that 'Culler's deconstructionist priorities lead him to overstate the essentialist dilemma of defining the *woman* reader', and suggests that what is implied by the hypothesis of a woman reader is a *feminist* reader.[59] Yet, a feminist reader need not be prescribed by gender and may be male or female. Within the terms of Culler's analysis, does this then mean that both men and women can read *like* feminists? Robert Scholes asks:

> ... is there any difference between reading *as* a woman and reading *like* a woman? Can Mary actually read *as* a woman because she *is* a woman, or can she only read *like* a woman because no individual can ever be a woman? To put the question still

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[56] Jacobus 1986, 299
[57] Fuss 1989, 25
[58] Modleski 1986, 133. For a critique of Modleski and other 'essentialist' accounts of feminist reading, cf. Fuss 1989, 23-38
[59] Showalter 1987, 126

> another way, can John read *as* a woman or only *like* a woman? If neither John nor Mary can really read *as* a woman, and either one can read *like* a woman, then what's the difference between John and Mary? [60]

Scholes suggests that 'until no one notices or cares about the difference we had better not pretend it isn't there'.[61] Culler, however, does not pretend that there is no difference between male and female readers. His analysis does not deny the influence of 'life' upon a woman's - or any other reader's - experience of a text. It suggests that the role played by a woman reader is not assumed randomly or arbitrarily, but is constructed 'with reference to her identity as a woman'. There is some degree of continuity and similarity between life and text in this analysis, but this continuity or similarity is not complete. A woman's experience of a text *may* be different to a man's experience of the same text because of her identity and her lived experience(s) as a woman, but similarly, a woman's experience of a text *may* also be different to another woman's experience of the same text because of her identity and her lived experience(s) as a woman.[62]

Some degree of continuity may thus be assumed between a woman reading, and Culler's hypothetical 'informed woman reader', despite her configuration as a hypothesis, as a critical construct. The two may never be identical, but the divisions between them may seem to reveal patterns of symmetry as well as elements of difference and discontinuity. The mapping of such symmetry suggests moreover, that women reading as or like women read unlike men - that gender difference may indeed be considered to make a difference to reading. A woman reading the *Metamorphoses* might, then, read this text differently. A woman reading the *Metamorphoses* might, then, make a difference.

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[60] Scholes 1987, 217
[61] Ibid
[62] This aspect of Culler's analysis recalls Holland's theory that 'interpretation is a function of identity' with individuals each possessing a unique 'identity theme' which shapes that reader's reading perspective.

Chaos

Reading like a woman reading Ovid

'... it has gotten hard not to notice how many people were never meant to count as examples of the allegedly generic man.'
Naomi Scheman, *Engenderings*

'Great care must be taken in working on feminine writing not to get trapped by names: to be signed with a woman's name doesn't necessarily make a piece of writing feminine. It could quite well be masculine writing, and conversely, the fact that a piece of writing is signed with a woman's name does not in itself exclude femininity. It's rare, but you can sometimes find femininity in writings signed by men: it does happen.'
Cixous[63]

Having questioned whether a woman *could* read the *Metamorphoses*, it might be pertinent to question whether she *should* read this male authored text. If a woman reader or a reader 'reading like a woman' elects to adopt a different perspective towards a text on the basis of gender difference, if she chooses to privilege 'feminine' features of indeterminacy and plurality, chaos and fragmentation rather than 'masculine' features of order and unity in her reading, should she not read a female authored text?

Elaine Showalter suggests that the woman reader should, indeed, focus her attention upon women's texts: [64]

> Feminist criticism can be divided into two distinct varieties. The first type is concerned with *woman as reader* - with woman as the consumer of male-produced literature, and with the way in which the hypothesis of a female reader changes our apprehension of a given text, awakening us to the significance of its sexual codes. I shall call this kind of analysis the *feminist critique*, and like other kinds of critique it is a historically grounded inquiry which probes the ideological assumptions of literary phenomena. Its subjects include the images and stereotypes of women in literature, the omissions of and misconceptions about women in criticism,

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[63] Cixous 1981, 323. Considering the authority that is attributed to the names with which writing is signed, would this *caveat* written by Helene Cixous, bear less authority if it were signed by Henri Cixous? We may take *her* word for it, but would we take *his*?
[64] Showalter 1979, 128.

> and the fissures in male-constructed literary history. It is also concerned with the exploitation and manipulation of the female audience, ... , and with the analysis of woman-as-sign in semiotic systems.

The second type, according to Showalter, is concerned with *woman as writer* - with woman as producer of literature. Showalter calls this kind of analysis *gynocritics*. She suggests that the male orientation of the first type of reading practice makes it less valuable to the female reader: 'In contrast to this angry or loving fixation on male literature, the programme of gynocritics is to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories.'[65]

Having emphasised the plurality and variety of the first form of the feminist critique as a mode of reading, Showalter rejects it as a mode which reproduces male systems of representation and male stereotypes of women, arguing that 'Gynocritics begins at the point when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history'.[66] Yet her own account of gynocritics is based upon the construction of an alternative system of linear absolutes which may be seen to reproduce, albeit through inversion, those of the old order.[67] Showalter's attempts to impose a form of (binary) division upon feminist criticism and to separate its multiple concerns into two distinct reading practices are based upon traditional reading strategies and gender hierarchies: 'the linear absolutes of male literary history'. Thus, despite Showalter's ostensible focus upon the 'hypothesis of a female reader', her arguments against the 'feminist critique' and for 'gynocriticism' privilege the author over the reader, and, in turn, privilege sex over text. It is the sex of the author and not the concerns of the reader that distinguish Showalter's two types of feminist criticism.[68]

The emphasis given in gynocritics to the sex of the author and, in particular, the authority that is given to texts written or 'signed' by women is regarded by Peggy

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[65] ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Modleski 1986, 125, suggests that this is a significant problem for feminist criticism: 'most of the available theories of reading, writing, sexuality, ideology or any other cultural production are built on male narratives of gender.'
[68] More recently, Showalter (1989, 5) has revised her position to suggest that feminist readers might - with due caution - read male authored texts: 'not as documents of sexism and misogyny, but as inscriptions of gender and 'renditions of sexual difference'.'

Kamuf as a reductive move of limited value to feminist criticism. She argues against Showalter that:[69]

> If the inaugural gesture of this feminist criticism is the reduction of the literary work to its signature and to the tautological assumption that a feminine 'identity' is one which signs itself with a feminine name, then it will be able to produce only tautological statements of dubious value: women's writing is writing signed by women. [...]
> If, on the other hand, by 'feminist' one understands a way of reading texts that points to the masks of truth with which phallocentrism hides its fictions, then one place to begin such a reading is by looking behind the mask of the proper name, the sign that secures our patriarchal heritage: the father's name and the index of sexual identity.

To identify a text such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a male text because it is signed with a male name, and to assume, therefore, that its configuration will be masculine, and that it will promote the 'linear absolutes of male literary history', is to be restricted by the very phallocentrism of that linear male order.

While the emphasis on 'women's writing' - that is writing signed by women - is an important part of feminist literary criticism, highlighting as it does the traditional silence of and about women writers, its scope is restrictive, particularly for classicists, who are largely limited to reading the writing of just two ancient women authors: Sappho and Sulpicia. Labelling a text as 'women's writing' - the writing of a woman - and then reading and writing about it for that reason may offer a political and ideological charge to fire against the canon. It may enable feminist critics to point an accusing finger at the patriarchal institutions and the social and cultural conditions which have historically silenced women. However, the problem with this labelling - or at least one of the most significant problems - is that it draws rigid distinctions between texts, between those authored by men and by women, on the basis of the sex of the author alone. Yet why should the writing of women and men necessarily be different?

If biology and anatomy are perceived to offer an inappropriate basis on which to ground a theory of sexual and textual difference, on what basis can this difference be determined - supposing such a difference to exist in the first place? Against

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[69] Kamuf 1980, 285f.

such biological determinism the critic Nancy Miller claims that the evidence for any sort of 'women's writing' - or, as she terms it, a 'woman-text' - should be looked for in 'the body of her writing and not the writing of her body.'[70] In an attempt to renegotiate the restrictions of these sexual/textual politics, theorists like Miller make a move away from the concept of sexed distinctions between male and female writing - that is the writing produced respectively by men and women - towards the notion of gendered distinctions between masculine and feminine writing. Texts are thus characterised by the idea of textual differences based on different styles of writing, different masculine and feminine discursive practices which might be employed by women and by men, so that a woman author might be seen to produce masculine writing, and a male author might be seen to produce a feminine text.

This move does not entirely do without reference to a biological or anatomical model of sex and gender. Although Miller rejects the biological or anatomical theory of sexual/textual difference, she maintains that a difference in the writing of men and women may exist: a difference that appears to be grounded in a notion of gender experience that is itself based upon the assumption of anatomical and biological difference. Moreover, within this model of textual difference, different writing styles and subjects are figured as masculine or feminine according to their perceived association with characteristics of a biologically determined idea of male and female. Masculine writing, whether authored by a man or a woman, might be characterised by its coherence, its unity, and logic, whereas feminine writing, whether authored by a man or a woman, might be characterised by its lack of coherence, unity, or logic.[71] In a similar way, Roman elegy might be gendered feminine and epic might be gendered masculine not only because of assumptions relating to subject matter - the elegiac poet writing of his *candida puella* and the epic poet writing of *arma virumque* - but also because of assumptions relating to gender specific characteristics such as softness and hardness or private and public - associated respectively with elegy and with women, or with epic and with men.[72]

The idea of a characteristically 'feminine' linguistic practice - potentially available to both male and female writers - forms the basis of the theory of *l'écriture féminine* proposed by French Feminists Hélene Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Luce

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[70] Miller 1980, 271
[71] Cf from biblio on writing and gender
[72] Cf. Wyke 1994

Irigaray: each writer advocating her own distinctive approach to this central idea.[73] However, while each writer suggests the potential for both women and men to employ such a 'feminine' linguistic practice, their definitions of who might have access to this practice and how this practice might operate are problematised by the apparent necessity to formalise the conditions of this practice in terms of the very linguistic codes and structures that they would reject, or at least renegotiate.

In the place of definitions, theorists attempting to characterise the operations of a feminine practice of writing thus often seek to describe either what it is not, or what it is like. The problems of representation are highlighted by Hélène Cixous: "It is impossible to *define* a feminine practice of writing, and this is an impossibility that will remain, for this practice will never be theorised, enclosed, encoded - which doesn't mean that it doesn't exist."[74] Instead, theorists suggest through allusion, metaphor, metonymy and denial that the terms and the logic of the representation of this feminine practice of writing lie elsewhere, that they lie somehow outside of language, in the silent realms outside of discourse. Indeed that appears to be what Cixous is suggesting when she describes feminine writing as that which cannot be defined, theorised, enclosed or encoded. For her denial is also a definition - and one very like the definition of woman as 'not-man', as not the Same but Other produced by the masculine system of representation that Cixous would seek to denounce. Her non-definition, then, emphasises the possibility of an *écriture féminine* that is as yet unwritten, unspoken, at the same time as it highlights the discursive restrictions placed upon women - forced to adopt a man-made language as their own if they are not to remain silent.

Perhaps one of the reasons why a specifically feminine practice of writing would be impossible to define, theorise or encode is suggested by Dale Spender's determinist theory of 'man made language' - a theory describing the alienation of women by and from language, figuring all writing as masculine, while figuring all women as feminine.[75] The general argument runs that women only have access to language and discourse through masculine systems of representation - systems

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[73] Cf. Marks and de Courtivron 1980

[74] Cixous 1980, 253

[75] Cf. Spender 1980. For a critical review of Spender see Black and Coward 1990. Spender's account of the formulation of gender identity by and within language is persuasive. However, her argument that (man-made) language constructs gender difference and gender hierarchies in the interests of men is challenged by the idea that 'men' must therefore pre-exist language. This problem is discussed further, in relation to Lacanian theories of language and gender identity, in chapter three.

supporting a masculine logic in which the female is repressed and in which difference is ordered as hierarchy. For example, Woman is not-man, or less-than-man, not the Same but Other. The feminine practice of writing described by Cixous, then, is seen as indescribable in the words of any man-made language and therefore impossible to define, theorise or encode.[76] If we were to have access to some utopian language or mode of signification that was not mediated through a masculine system of representation, encoding a masculine logic, the suggestion is that the very concept of definitions would be meaningless.

Like Cixous, Irigaray seeks to avoid enclosing or encoding the practice of a feminine mode of signification. Her non-definitive definition of a feminine discourse or *parler femme* is described as: 'Not so much a definitive method as an experimental process or a discovery of the possible connections between female sexuality and writing.' She suggests further that such a process would figure an attempt 'to disrupt or alter the syntax of discursive logic, based on the requirements of univocity and masculine sameness, in order to express the plurality and mutuality of feminine difference and mime the relations of self-affection.'[77] Irigaray's emphasis on mimesis as a feature of 'writing as a woman', together with her suggestion of its potential to draw 'connections between female sexuality and writing' might be compared to Culler's account of 'reading as a woman', in which a similar emphasis is placed upon the process of mimesis and the drawing of connections between female experience and reading. Feminine or feminist writing, like feminine or feminist reading, may thus be seen as a process, potentially open to both women and men, and at some level influenced by lived experience.

This emphasis upon the role of experience in determining the femininity or masculinity of a reading or writing style is not an innovation made by contemporary, or even twentieth century feminist critics. It is evident in Samuel Butler's 1897 analysis of: 'The Authoress of the *Odyssey*: where and when she wrote, who she was, the use she made of the *Iliad*, and how the poem grew under her hands'. Well practised in what passed for the literary sport of the time - that is identifying women writers through their masculine pseudonyms - Butler had read Homer's epic with the critical eye of a 19th century reader and concluded that Homer must have been a woman: indeed, 'a young, headstrong and unmarried

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[76] Cf. Modleski 1986

[77] Irigaray1985, 222. Irigaray's ideas on this form of mimesis are explored further in chapter three.

woman'. He based his conclusion on close critical readings of the text which revealed to him distinct traces of femininity, and which he saw as relating to the author of the text rather than simply to the text itself.

Among the many instances cited by Butler as examples of the 'femininity' of the *Odyssey* and its author, he suggests that: 'The whole of iv.625-847 is strongly suggestive of a woman's writing, but I cannot expect any one to admit this without reading either the original or some complete translation.'[78] He continues, to claim that: 'Calypso's jealousy of Penelope (v.203,&c) is too prettily done for a man. A man would be sure to overdo it.'[79] However, perhaps his most telling observation relates to book 17 of the *Odyssey*, where he comments upon the 'disappointing' exchange between Odysseus and Argus, supporting his reading of the text as 'feminine', as having been written by a woman, with the claim that: 'Argus (xvii.292) is not a very good name for a dog.'[80]

In addition to these 'feminine' characteristics of the narrative, Butler was struck particularly by the number of sympathetically drawn female characters and the wealth of social and domestic detail in the *Odyssey*, claiming that so many little domestic touches must have been drawn from life:[81]

> Book vi. is perhaps the loveliest in the whole poem, but I can hardly doubt that if it were given to a *Times* critic of to-day as an anonymous work, and he was told to determine the sex of the writer he would ascribe it to a young unmarried woman without a moment's hesitation. Let the reader note how Nausicaa has to keep her father up to having a clean shirt on when he ought to have one (vi. 60), whereas her younger brothers appear to keep her up to having one for them when they want one. These little touches suggest drawing from life by a female member of Alcinous' own family who knew his little ways from behind the scenes.

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78 Butler 1922, 145
79 Ibid.
80 Butler 1922, 146. Butler's comments are generally of this style and say more about Butler and his attitudes to women than they do about the *Odyssey* or its author - as, perhaps, all readings do. Although generally charming, some of Butler's observations suggest a certain element of misogyny in his reading perspective. Thus, his reading of Odysseus' exchange with Nausicaa, describes both Nausicaa and the 'authoress' of the *Odyssey* herself as demonstrating characteristics of the 'man-hatress' (145).
81 Ibid.

Butler's reading of Homer was not a ground-breaking work in the field of classical scholarship. Yet what seems to be particularly significant about his work is that his emphasis on the 'authority of experience' - this idea of drawing from life - as the key to identifying a 'woman's writing' is maintained by many feminist critics and theorists working on theories of gender today. Some feminist critics and theorists in their attempts to find ways of characterising 'feminine writing' or 'women's writing' maintain, like Butler and his peers writing 100 years ago, that such writing is not only related to experience, but that it is grounded in an authority of experience, so that only a woman can write 'as a woman' and only a woman can speak 'as a woman'.

Such characterisation of reading and writing, however, is - as Peggy Kamuf warns - necessarily reductive and tautologous: reading as a woman becomes that which happens when a woman reads, writing as a woman becomes that which happens when a woman writes. It is important that feminist criticism, in both its political and personal forms, maintains some distinction between women and men, and in particular between the experiences of women and men. As Alice Jardine claims: 'feminism, while infinite in its variations, is finally rooted in the belief that women's truth-in-experience and reality is and has always been different from men's.'[82] Yet it is also important that a distinction is maintained between and within the (different) experiences of men and women and their (different) experiences of reading and writing. Men can and do read like women and produce feminine writing. Women can and do read like men and produce masculine writing. As Culler suggests, there is a 'division' or fracture between and within any reading or writing subject and the 'experience' of that subject.[83] The challenge faced by the feminist critic is to make this division meaningful.

Reading Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as or like a woman, a reader must negotiate other challenges. The *Metamorphoses* is a male-authored text representing a (predominantly) male perspective: is it possible or desirable for a reader reading like a woman to share this perspective - or is it only open to a reader who reads like a man? Is it possible or desirable for a reader to resist this perspective - or is to do so to comply with the directives of a misogynist discourse? It is a text in which women are raped, mutilated and objectified. Should women read such narratives? How should women read such narratives? How significant is it that

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82 Jardine 1985, 147
83 Culler 1982, 64

men suffer similar experiences? How should women read these narratives? As Amy Richlin claims, 'A woman reading Ovid faces difficulties'.[84]

For Richlin, as for many other feminist readers of Ovid, the negotiation of these difficulties centres on one crucial ideological point. The challenge of how, or even whether, to read Ovid is based upon the reader's identification of the author as either sympathetic or unsympathetic to women.[85] The reader's critical orientation depends upon whether she views Ovid and his work as 'misogynist' or as 'proto-feminist'. Yet the narrative of the *Metamorphoses* and its readings (in)consistently configure its author as both and as neither. To impose these distinctions upon Ovid and his text is to ignore and to obscure the inconsistencies and differences which contribute to the complex dynamics of the *Metamorphoses*.

This problem of critical dis-orientation is illustrated by Stephen Greenblatt's personal account of his reluctance to enrol himself in one particular theoretical camp.[86]

> In the 1970's I used to teach courses with names like 'Marxist Aesthetics' on the Berkeley campus. This came to an inglorious end when I was giving such a course - it must have been the mid 70's - and I remember a student getting very angry with me. Now it's true that I tended to like those Marxist figures who were troubled in relation to Marxism - Walter Benjamin, the

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[84] Richlin 1992, 158. Against the recuperation of the *Metamorphoses* for the 'female' or 'feminist' reader, Culham (1990, 162) argues that it 'assigns feminists the role of *re*acting, *re*reading, *re*sponding. It is difficult, in fact, to see how feminist efforts to reappropriate this male authored text ultimately differ from the readings which produced Ovidius Christianus, Ovide Moralisé, and Ovid the Neoplatonist.' But it is difficult, in fact, to see how else ancient texts might be read - by feminists, or by any other reader. Without such reappropriation, and without the potential for such re-appropriation, ancient texts cease to be relevant or available to modern readers: the cease to be 'classics'.

[85] Richlin views Ovid's apparent 'sympathy' for the female characters in his poetry with scepticism. Cf. Richlin 1992. Other (notably male) critics are more readily convinced. Thus Curran 1978, 213 claims: 'Ovid's attitude towards women may appear paradoxical. Although some of his work may give the impression of extravagant, if elegant, sexism, at other times he exhibits a sympathy for women and an effort to understand, as well as a man can, women's intellectual and emotional life rivalled by no male author of antiquity other than Euripides.' This is a contentious issue in Ovidian scholarship, dividing readers of the poet's work into those who view him as 'sexist' and those who admire his 'sympathetic' representations of women. Little negotiation between the two sides is permitted: Ovid, it seems, must be a misogynist or a proto-feminist. Most readers of Ovid have something to say on this point, but in particular cf. Cahoon 1988, Davis 1989, Gamel 1989, Hemker 1985, James 1997, Verducci 1980, and Griffin 1977, 59: 'Ovid actually liked women as a sex - something that cannot be taken for granted in the case of many other Latin poets.'

[86] Greenblatt 1989, 13-14

> early rather than the later Lukacs, and so forth - and I remember someone finally got up and screamed out in class 'You're either a Bolshevik or a Menshevik - make up your fucking mind,' and then slammed the door. It was a little unsettling, but I thought about it afterwards and realised that I wasn't sure whether I was a Menskevik, but I certainly wasn't a Bolshevik.

This account illustrates the tensions concomitant with an attempt to avoid inhabiting a unified critical or ideological position. It highlights the expectation that, interpretation being regarded as ideologically charged, interpreters should identify the ideological position within which they wish to locate themselves. Oscillation between two positions, particularly between two ostensibly polar oppositions, is regarded negatively, as a sign of critical weakness.

Stephen Greenblatt's problematic oscillation between two such positions may be seen to relate to some of the difficulties involved in attempting to orientate or to negotiate a consistent reading position from which to engage with the *Metamorphoses.* It is not enough to employ feminist or gynocritical tools to configure Ovid straightforwardly as a 'proto-feminist' whose texts represent women in a sympathetic way, or to identify the author of the *Metamorphoses* simply as a 'misogynist' whose work forms part of an androcentric discourse to be resisted. Thinking about it, I'm not sure if Ovid is a misogynist, but I'm certainly not sure that he isn't a proto-feminist.

Resistance

Reading Resistance[1]

it was men mostly who did the talking and what they were talking about was themselves although they used such generic terms as people or mankind these terms were really a euphemism for men but we didn't know that since the men didn't think it was necessary to say so and the women permitted the men to do most all the talking it was easy to conclude that we were all humans and when one human spoke that human spoke for all of us all of which means that until recently very few of us realized we were women
Jill Johnson, *Lesbian Nation*

Re-vision - the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction - is, for us, more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival.
Adrienne Rich, *'When we dead awaken: writing as re-vision'*

The pluralism of feminist literary criticism offers the woman reader a variety of strategies – from the radical to the conservative – encouraging her to make a difference to her reading.[2] She is invited to reread, to reject, to re-appropriate, and above all – to resist:[3] to resist the patriarchal dominance of the canon; to resist the misogyny and misunderstanding of male authors; to resist the claims of male biased texts to present universally valid truths about *human* experience. Whatever reading position(s) she wishes to assume, the woman reader is encouraged to become in some way a resisting reader.

The model resisting reader, on which many woman base their own reading roles, is Judith Fetterley, author of *The Resisting Reader*. Responding to a perceived male bias in American fiction, Fetterley highlights the ways in which such literature encourages its readers to read as or like men - to identify with or as a male. She claims that 'Women are taught to think as men, to identify with a male

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[1] This chapter has been accepted for publication, in revised form, in the forthcoming (1999) *Perspectives on Ovid's Metamorphoses*, eds. Barchiesi, Hardie and Hinds.
[2] Culler 1982, 43, suggests that the plurality and indeterminacy of contemporary feminist responses to the complex issues involved in reading 'as' or 'like' a woman may be regarded positively: 'If feminist criticism has no single or simple answer to the question of the nature of the reading experience and its relation to other experience, it is because it takes it seriously and explores it in ways that bring out the complexity of the question and of the notion of "experience".'
[3] Richlin 1992, 161 surveys the options open to women reading Ovid. She suggests: 'Three things to do with a lot of male biased texts: throw them out, take them apart, find female based ones instead.'

point of view, and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values'.[4] This identification, she suggests, results in the 'immasculation' of women readers as they assume a male point of view and a male system of values.

This 'immasculation' of the reader, she suggests, causes women readers of male authored and male biased literature to be assigned a position of powerlessness:[5]

> not simply the powerlessness which derives from not seeing one's experience articulated, clarified, and legitimized in art, but more significantly, the powerlessness which results from the endless division of self against self, the consequence of the invocation to identify as male while being reminded that to be female ... is to be *not male.*

Fetterley criticises this literature, not for its male authorship or for its bias *per se,* but for the claims that such literature speaks of and for *humans*, rather than for gendered beings. She challenges the notion that literary texts – particularly canonical or 'classic' literary texts – speak of universally valid truths about *human* experience, arguing that the *human* experience which such texts allegedly represent is effectively a *male* experience that is alien and alienating to the experience(s) of women. Fetterley argues that when appeals to universality and humanism are employed to hide or to naturalise a male bias in literature, it is at the expense of women readers, who are encouraged by such appeals to ignore their gender. In her introduction to *The Resisting Reader* she claims that:[6]

> One of the main things that keeps the design of our literature unavailable to the consciousness of the woman reader, and hence impalpable, is the very posture of the apolitical, the pretence that literature speaks universal truths through forms from which all the merely personal, the purely subjective, has been burned away or at least transformed through the medium of art into the representative. When only one reality is encouraged, legitimised, and transmitted and when that limited vision endlessly insists on its own comprehensiveness, then we have the conditions necessary for that confusion of consciousness in which impalpability flourishes.

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[4] Fetterley 1978, xx
[5] Fetterley 1978, xiii
[6] Fetterley 1978, xi. Cf. Rabinowitz 1986, 172. In her reading of Euripides' *Hippolytus* Rabinowitz draws attention to the 'glow of humanism' which casts a shadow upon the misogynist features of this text and asks: 'Is this a classic that teaches women to read as men?'

Resistance

The alternative to that 'limited vision', Fetterley proposes, is 're-vision', a different perspective suggested to woman readers by Adrienne Rich, who describes this form of rereading as 'Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction'.[7] This form of re-vision forms the basis of Fetterley's project and provides the central focus of her reading strategy. She asks women readers to look again at those texts and narratives which require women to read like men – to view from a masculine perspective – and she asks them to resist rather than to assent to the dominant discourses inscribed there by both author and reader: to resist the universalising strategies that privilege the male over and against the female, representing and naturalising the male perspective, the masculine gaze and the male experience as 'the human'. In order for women to see with fresh eyes, to enter old texts from new critical directions, Fetterley asks them to become resisting readers.

Although Fetterley focuses specifically upon readings of male biased American literature, her characteristic style of reading resistance has been adopted and adapted by many women readers of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[8] Like Fetterley, these readers focus their resistance against the limited and limiting vision of received readings of the text to produce rereadings that emphasise a different perspective. Thus Leslie Cahoon – subjectively grounding her reading of the *Metamorphoses* "as a professional classicist ...woman, mother, and teacher"[9] – claims that 'I find that I become a far more "resisting reader", even more of a hostile reader, in response to much modern male-authored criticism than I am to Ovid's plural discourse.'[10]

As a resisting reader Cahoon emphasises not only the possibility of a different, female perspective in and towards the *Metamorphoses*, but also its desirability. In response to contemporary readings of the *Metamorphoses*, she suggests that the narrative structure of Ovid's poem – with its shifting narrators and points of focalization, with its richness and variety of female characters and voices and with

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[7] Rich 1972, 18

[8] Cahoon, Richlin and Sharrock all make reference to Fetterley and her model of the 'resisting reader' in their readings of the *Metamorphoses*. Thus, Cahoon 1996, 46: 'Both Calliope and Hinds make me a "resisting reader"'; Richlin 1992, 179: 'We can appropriate; we can resist'; and Sharrock 1991b, 177: as 'the "resisting reader" who identifies and rejects the reading of the implied reader'.

[9] Cahoon 1996, 46

[10] Cahoon 1996, 54 n.21

its indeterminacy[11] and plurality – invites readers to privilege indeterminacy and plurality in their reading. She suggests that readers are invited to seek alternative perspectives from which to view the text, and as an alternative to the phallocentric perspectives offered by 'masculine' reading positions, she suggests that they may adopt a feminist perspective. Cahoon, then, does not perceive an intrinsic male bias in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that excludes the perspective of the reader who reads 'like a woman' but rather sees a text that encodes a multiplicity of perspectives, some of which may appeal particularly to such readers.

Amy Richlin is a resisting reader of Ovid for different reasons and in different way. Like Cahoon, she resists received readings of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and, in particular, those that fail to acknowledge what she sees as the male bias of the text: those readings that 'set out to absolve the poet of his apparent sexism'.[12] Like many other feminist readers, Richlin finds the violent content of many of the stories narrated in the *Metamorphoses* to be 'fascinating but repellent'[13]. She draws attention to the pornographic significance of the rapes that figure so frequently in this text, questioning the context of male titillation and female objectification in which many are represented. Unlike Cahoon, Richlin does perceive an intrinsic male bias in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and one that challenges readers of the text. Yet, like Cahoon, Richlin is still able to reread Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a resisting reader and to approach the text from a female perspective. Despite the perceived male bias of the text, she claims that 'Resistance is possible'.[14]

These competing readings of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Cahoon and Richlin realise the possibility that a different female perspective may be employed to produce different readings of this text. Moreover, they demonstrate the potential plurality and indeterminacy of the 'female' or 'feminist' perspective: a perspective in and by which more than one reality is 'encouraged, legitimised and transmitted'.[15] They also highlight potential weaknesses in Fetterley's model of the resisting reader, a model which, in its emphasis upon 'the consciousness of the woman reader', fails to acknowledge the indeterminate number of variables that

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[11] Kennedy 1993, 10, comments that '... invoking the word "indeterminacy" is a fine way of making the flesh creep, or creating a warm glow'.
[12] Richlin 1992, 159. This criticism is directed particularly against Cahoon's readings of Ovid's rapes. Cf Cahoon 1985.
[13] Richlin 1990, 175
[14] Richlin 1992, 178
[15] Fetterley 1978, xi

make the very idea of such a 'consciousness', such a 'woman' and such a 'reader' a complex and unpredictable subject for analysis.

Most significantly, the linear perspective of Fetterley's model of resistant readership limits the degree to which a reader may engage with the non-linear, complex systems of a text. Sara Mills resists Fetterley's re-visionist reading strategy and identifies the problem of this linear model as its over-simplication of the complex dynamics of a text and its readings.[16]

> Fetterley is implicitly describing the notion of the dominant reading of a text which is that which presents itself as self-evidently *the* reading of the text ... The notion of a dominant reading has been questioned to some extent in recent theorising, especially since this notion of a reader being proffered a position to read from may be seen as reinstituting a view of the reader as passive and as not having to engage in a negotiation with the text. In using the term 'dominant reading', it is necessary to ask whether, after all, it is so easily recognised, and whether in fact there may be a number of dominant readings within the text.

Fetterley's resisting reader assumes an opposing position to that ostensibly offered to her by a male biased text. From this position she seeks to resist 'immasculation' - the assumption of a male reading identity and subject position - by challenging and renegotiating the dominant discourse of that text. Yet her position is compromised by the notion that this dominant discourse may be variable or plural. For if a resistant reading may be seen as a response deliberately emplotted and authorised by the text, to what extent is that reading 'resistant'? To resist may be to compromise or to comply with an authorial directive. In the dynamic context(s) of a literary text, to read 'against the grain' may also be to read 'with the grain'.[17] 'Reading resistance' might be seen, then, as a rhetorical as well as a strategic framework, offering the reader the opportunity to identify the authorial or textual directives which aim towards the 'dominant reading' of a text, and then to

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[16] Mills 1994, 27-28

[17] Cf. Foucault 1989, 153. Foucault's account of the interdependent relationship between resistance and authority, perceived here as political authority and resistance, offers a significant point of reference for this issue. He claims that resistance 'is not anterior to the power which it opposes. It is coextensive with it and absolutely its contemporary... I am not positing a substance of resistance in the face of power. I am simply saying as soon as there is a power relation there is the possibility of resistance.'

'translate' those directives differently, to redirect them towards an alternative reading or readings of the text.[18]

In a complex and dynamic system such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* the limitations of a linear approach to reading and interpretation are particularly evident. Throughout the *Metamorphoses* characters and narrators continuously change: different views and different voices are seen and heard as perspectives and narratives shift. Focalization requires constant renegotiation as internal and external narratives offer different perspectives and competing discourses, open to the compliance or resistance of the reader.[19] Or rather, open to the compliance *and* resistance of the reader. For in reading this text, to resist one discourse – encoding one perspective and one voice – may be to comply with the perspective and voice of another discourse. The competing points of focalization in the *Metamorphoses* allow even a 'reading against the grain' to be identified as a response deliberately emplotted and authorised by the text.

Yet the aim of Fetterley's reading strategy is not so much to oppose or perversely to 'misread' male authored and male biased texts, as to reread these texts in such a way as to make them available to 'the consciousness of the woman reader'. It is the 'limited vision' of the received readings of those texts which Fetterley particularly condemns and seeks to resist. For, as her own resistant readings demonstrate, it is not the texts in and of themselves that exclude the woman reader and deny the possibility of a female perspective, but rather the readings of those texts, through which 'only one reality is encouraged, legitimised and transmitted'. Thus, while Fetterley's project may be characterised as an opposition to the dominant readings of male texts - a 'reading against the grain'[20] of selected male biased works of literature - the dominant readings and the 'grain' against which she reads are not necessarily located exclusively within those texts. Rather, Fetterley may be seen to read against the grain that is produced by the interaction of a literary text and its received readings; her reading against the grain assumes a grain that is not intrinsic to the text.

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[18] Cf. Mills 1994, 29

[19] Cf. Barchiesi 1989 and De Jong 1987. De Jong defines a text as 'the focalized story put into words by a narrator'; the function of a narrator as 'consisting of the verbal presentation of the story'; and the function of a focalizer as 'consisting of the perceptional, emotional and intellectual presentation of the fabula' - 'a chronological series of events caused or experienced by characters in a fictional world'.

[20] Cf Macherey 1978 on 'reading against the grain' as a strategy to make use of the silences of a text. Boardman 1994, 207, claims: 'The notion of the resisting reader is really the apogee of the practice of reading against the grain'.

Fetterley's model of the resisting reader then is not (only) a model of opposition and denial, it is also a model of negotiation and re-negotiation, the aim of which is to open up texts to the woman reader, or the reader reading 'like a woman'. Within this model of reading texts are not considered to be definitively 'closed' to such readers in and of themselves but to be closed indefinitely by the dominant readings that they produce. The resisting reader, if she is not to reject those texts whose readings present 'man-made women' or those which offer unsympathetic representations of the female, and if he is not to refuse to read those narratives in which women are objectified or denied subjectivity, must renegotiate the contexts in which reading takes place. Resisting readers may resist the perspectives promoted by dominant readings of a text, they may resist interpretative closure, and they may resist identification with male subjects in order to identify with female subjects instead.

Such renegotiation, however, is not achieved without some degree of tension. It might be argued that to recuperate for women or feminist readers texts in which women are objectified or denied subjectivity is to make the 'unacceptable' 'acceptable' to such readers - even if this recuperation is achieved by demonstrating resistance to the dominant perspectives presented by those texts. The re-appropriation of misogynist texts may be seen to promote their reproduction and to 'excuse the inexcusable'[21] by making such texts appear inoffensive without discharging their offensive potential. The rhetoric of resistance, then, plays an important role in reminding the resisting reader that his or her 'alternative' readings are only provisionally privileged over and above the 'dominant' readings of a text. By drawing attention to the hierarchy implicit in the distinction of these different modes of reading, 'the reader can liberate the oppositional and alternative ideologies of a text without disavowing the presence of the dominant one'.[22]

To become a resisting reader then, is to recognise that reading positions, like gender positions, may be ordered in terms of a hierarchy in which some positions dominate. It is to become more aware of the reading positions that one assumes in order to read, and to become more aware of the reading positions that one is

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[21] Cf. Pearce 1994 and Richlin 1992
[22] Pearce 1994, 171

directed to assume by the text being read. But it is not, as Shoshana Felman suggests, to 'resist reading':[23]

> The danger with becoming a resisting reader is that we end up, in effect, *resisting reading*. But resisting reading for the sake of holding on to our ideologies and preconceptions (be they chauvinist or feminist) is what we tend to do in any case.

For all reading entails a degree of resistance. To some extent we are, perhaps, always already resisting readers, seeing what we want to see in the texts we read and resisting or refusing to see that which we would prefer not to see.[24] To become an active 'resisting reader', however, is to identify and to challenge our ideologies and preconceptions ('be they chauvinist or feminist'). It is to look for examples and models of resistance offered by the texts we read and to highlight their 'points of resistance'.[25]

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[23] Felman 1993, 6

[24] This point is illustrated by the way in which, until relatively recently, the issue of rape in the *Metamorphoses* was generally avoided or occluded by Ovidian readers and critics. Curran 1978 exposed this 'dirty little secret of Ovidian scholarship'.

[25] Cf. Silverman 1983, 144 and 232. In Silverman's (Lacanian) analysis of subjectivity and language, the female subject is defined as 'a point of resistance' in a patriarchal society.

Resistance

Resisting Orpheus

all the male poets write of orpheus
as if they look back and expect
to find me walking patiently
behind them. they claim i fell into hell.
damn them, i say.
i stand in my own pain
and sing my own song.
Alta, 'euridice'

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* may be seen to encode perspectives that exclude the woman reader or the reader reading like a woman - particularly when these perspectives are presented as the 'dominant reading' - but other perspectives are always available. The many internal narrators and focalizers in the *Metamorphoses* present many different views and different perspectives which are each open to the compliance or resistance of the reader. Internal narrators, moreover, draw attention to the authority of the external poet-narrator, problematising notions of authorial intention and dominant readings. Internal narrators and focalizers highlight the distinction between the (historical) figure of the poet-author and the (literary) figures of his narrative *personae*, foregrounding issues of perspective and presentation.[26]

A poet figure such as Orpheus who narrates a series of stories in book 10 of the *Metamorphoses*[27] may be regarded as a representative of the external poet-narrator sharing his perspective and expressing his views. Alternatively, he may be regarded as an alter-ego for the external poet-narrator offering a different perspective and expressing an alternative view-point. Thus, Glenn suggests that Ovid should not be identified with Orpheus, suggesting that 'Ovid, though he is not unsympathetic to Orpheus, seems to find him strange'.[28] Peter Knox adopts an

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[26] Cf. De Jong 1987, 29, 33. De Jong argues that 'every narrator is also a focalizer' but suggests that not every focalizer must also be narrator. In Book 10 then, Ovid may be regarded as the primary focalizer (and narrator) and Orpheus may be regarded as the secondary focalizer (and narrator), but other characters - both speaking and silent - may also be regarded.as performing the function of internal focalizers in this embedded narrative.

[27] Ganymede, Hyacinthus, the Cerastae, the Propoetides, Pygmalion, Myrrha, Venus and Adonis, and Atalanta and Hippomenes - narrated by Orpheus' Venus. Leach 1974, 106, sees the song of Orpheus as a microcosm of Ovid's poem: 'The song of Orpheus imitates Ovid's own organization insofar as it has its own little chronology centred about the inhabitants of Paphos and its own tale within a tale.'

[28] Glenn 1986, 131, 140. Glenn suggests further that Ovid employs Orpheus in order to disavow

alternative perspective claiming that Orpheus is 'virtually indistinguishable from Ovid himself'[29], while Michaela Janan emphasises a number of fundamental differences between the two poets which could be seen to suggest a number of fundamental similarities.[30] Janan observes an inverted symmetry in Orpheus' prooemium between Orpheus' own declared poetic history and Ovid's. In the introduction to his song, Orpheus outlines his poetic programme and offers a form of *recusatio* for having tried and rejected epic themes for his poetry:

> ... Iouis est mihi saepe potestas
> dicta prius: cecini plectro grauiore Gigantas
> sparsaque Phlegraeis uictricia fulmina campis.
> nunc opus est leuiore lyra, puerosque canamus
> dilectos superis inconcessisque puellas
> ignibus attonitas meruisse libidine poenam.

> ... I have often sung of the power of Jove before:
> With heavier chord I have sung of the Giants
> and of the victorious thunderbolts hurled on Phlegraean fields.
> Now a lighter lyric is needed, and I sing of boys
> loved by gods and girls struck
> by strange passions, deserving the punishment of their lust.

*Met.*10.148-154

Janan highlights the difference between Ovid and Ovid's Orpheus in the former's transition from elegy to epic in the composition of the *Metamorphoses*, and the latter's reverse transition from epic to elegy *within* the composition of the *Metamorphoses*. Yet, this instance of difference might also be taken as an example of correspondence between the two poets. For within the epically conceived *Metamorphoses* Ovid, like his Orpheus, moves away from stories of gods and giants to tell - amongst others - of both boys and girls loved by gods, in a style that is often highly reminiscent of his previous elegiac works.[31] Janan suggests a further reverse parallel in Orpheus' statement of intended themes (*Met.*10.153-154) and a similar statement of themes in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (*Ars.*

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responsibility for the story of Myrrha.
[29] Knox 1986, 62
[30] Janan 1988, 114-16
[31] Many critics draw attention to the elegiac features of the *Metamorphoses*. Cf. in particular Knox 1986

1.31-34) in which, unlike Orpheus, Ovid claims he will *not* tell of strange passions or crimes of lust. However, just as Orpheus fails to restrict his poetry to his stated programme, so too may Ovid be accused of similarly failing to honour his pledge to tell only of lawful and safe sex in his *Ars Amatoria*: he refers to the myths of both Byblis and Myrrha (*Ars.*1.283-288) and narrates the story of Pasiphae and the bull at length (*Ars.*1.289-326).

A further correspondence between the two poets which appears to suggest their similarity rather than (or at least as much as) their difference appears in the *Amores*[32] where, like his Orpheus, Ovid claims to have rejected plans to write epic poetry (significantly a gigantomachy) in favour of elegy.

ausus eram, memini, caelestia dicere bella
centimanumque Gyen - et satis oris erat -
cum male se Tellus ulta est, ingestaque Olympo
ardua deuexum Pelion Ossa tulit.
in manibus nimbos et cum Ioue fulmen habebam,
quod bene pro caelo mitteret ille suo -
clausit amica fores! ego cum Ioue fulmen omisi;
excidit ingenio Iuppiter ipse meo.
Iuppiter, ignoscas! nil me tua tela iuvabant;
clausa tuo maius ianua fulmen habet.
blanditias elegosque leuis, mea tela, resumpsi;
mollierunt duras lenia uerba fores.

I had dared, I remember, to sing of the wars of heaven
and of hundred-handed Gyen - and my voice was strong enough-
of when Earth was poorly avenged, and steep Ossa
bearing rugged Pelion was piled upon Olympus.
I had in my hands the clouds, and Jove with the bolt
which he would throw to save his own sky -
My lover closed her door! I dropped Jove with his bolt;
Jupiter himself fell from my mind.
Juppiter, forgive me! Your weapons could not help me;
that closed door had a greater bolt than yours.
I have taken up light and charming elegy, *my* weapon;

[32] This passage is also cited by Janan (1988, 115) but is not developed as an instance of the similarity between Orpheus and Ovid.

> gentle words have softened hard doors.
>
> *Amores* 2.1.11- 22

Like Orpheus, who is prompted to turn to elegy following the loss of Eurydice, it is the loss of Ovid's *amica* which prompts him to reject epic and to adopt elegy.

With its own negotiation of the issues of *auctoritas* the song of Orpheus challenges the reader of the *Metamorphoses* to attempt to negotiate the issues of authority that it raises, and to consider the role of the reader in the legitimation (and authorisation) of that authority. Sara Myers suggests that:[33]

> Internal narrators bring to the fore the issue of the reliability of the narrator, which has implications for understanding Ovid's authorial posture in the poem as a whole. His embedded narratives provide repeated and contrasting paradigms for the very nature of tale-telling and for audience-response.

The character and perspective of Orpheus is framed by the external poet-narrator before the internal narrator begins his narrative, establishing a framework or matrix of expectation which directs the reader to view Orpheus in a particular way.[34] Orpheus is represented as a misogynist who rejects *feminea Venus*, but this misogyny is not justified by the poet-narrator as it might be. It is not described as directly resulting from Orpheus' grief or love for the lost Eurydice, it is rather described in ambiguous terms as resulting from his bad luck with women, or perhaps from his promise of fidelity to Eurydice. Orpheus is also represented as an 'evangelical' misogynist, keen to persuade other men to adopt his perspective and to follow his example, to see women as he does.

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[33] Myers 1994, 70. Specific studies of internal narrators in the *Metamorphoses* include: Gamel 1984, Hoffman 1985, Knox 1986, Leach 1974, Nagle 1988, Newlands 1986.

[34] *... omnemque refugerat Orpheus*
femineam Venerem, seu quod male cesserat illi,
siue fidem dederat; multas tamen ardor habebat
iungere se uati, multae doluere repulsae.
ille etiam Thracum populis fuit auctor amorem
in teneros transferre mares citraque iuuentam
aetatis breue uer et primos carpere flores.
Met. 10.79-80

However, his audience in the *Metamorphoses* is not composed of the men of Thrace, but of trees, wild beasts and birds spell-bound by the power of his music (*Met.*10.143-144 *tale nemus uates attraxerat inque ferarum / concilio, medius turbae, uolucrumque sedebat*). They listen in silent enchantment as he tells them of the self-generated transformation in his artistic identity[35] from epic to elegiac poet, and as he explains to them his poetic programme. The poet appears not only to have rejected the company of women but also to have rejected the epic genre for the elegiac, electing to sing of the loves of *pueri* and *puellae* instead of the adventures of gods and giants. Such an explicit declaration of themes establishes a matrix of expectation that shapes, or seeks to shape, the audience's response to the stories that follow. Any reading of the subsequent stories is necessarily influenced to some degree by Orpheus' programmatic statement that he intends to sing of 'boys loved by gods and girls struck by strange passions, deserving the punishment of their lust', even though this is not obviously the unifying theme of the following narratives.[36]

Given the 'nature' of his audience, it is surprising perhaps that Orpheus does not sing of the metamorphoses of trees, wild beasts and birds as Ovid does elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses*. Nonetheless, regardless of its theme, this 'ideal' audience is charmed by Orpheus' song: *carmine dum tali siluas animosque ferarum / Threicius uates et saxa sequentia ducit* (*Met.*11.1f). Glenn observes that: 'This is a tribute to the power of the bard's music; Ovid says so at the start of the next book. But since Orpheus proceeds to tell the owl and the wild pussy-cat about Ganymede, Hyacinthus, Pygmalion, Myrrha, and Adonis, there is something comic about the situation, just as there would be about singing true romances to a tortoise'.[37]

A second audience is less impressed. The women of Thrace, offended by Orpheus' misogyny see - but apparently do not hear - the *Threicius uates* as he sings to the trees, beasts, birds and stones and launch an impassioned attack against him. For the first time ever, so the poet-narrator reports, Orpheus' voice is powerless and he is unable to calm or to persuade the Thracian women to spare him: ... *in illo tempore primum / inrita dicentem nec quicquam uoce mouentem / sacrilegae perimunt* (*Met.*11.39-41). Initially the women's weapons are powerless against the

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[35] Cf Leach 1974

[36] Anderson 1972, 493, 501, 517, demonstrates that with the appropriate perspective and 'careful interpretation' the stories of book 10 can be made to fit Orpheus' declared themes.

[37] Glenn 1986, 136

poet as Orpheus' music renders harmless the rocks and ivy wreathed spears that they throw at him but, as the narrator reports, they drown out the sound of the poet's song with their own discordant sounds: the clamour of flutes and horns, the beating of breasts and drums, and the howling of raging maenads.[38] Unlike the first 'ideal' audience, this audience resists Orpheus' power and authority. The Thracian women reject Orpheus' song and supplant his music with their own.

In this act of violence, the Thracian women may be seen to offer an example of one mode or model of resistance that might be adopted by a reader seeking to read this text 'like a woman': they simply refuse to 'read'. As if in response to Amy Richlin's suggestions of ways to deal with male biased texts - 'throw them out, take them apart, find female based ones instead'[39] - the Thracian women refuse to listen to Orpheus, they tear *him* apart, and they replace his song with their own distinctly feminine form of maenad music. However, in the *Metamorphoses* alternative models and perspectives are always available, and for those readers who might prefer to adopt a less extreme response, other forms of resistance are possible.

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38 *cunctaque tela forent cantu mollita, sed ingens*
clamor et infracto Berecyntia tibia cornu
tympanaque et plausus et Bacchei ululatus
obstrepuere sono citharae,
*Met.*11.15-18

39 Richlin 1992, 161

Re-reading the Propoetides

sanguine quae uero non rubet, arte rubet.
Ars 3.200

The plurality of the *Metamorphoses* and the potential for resistant readings can be further illustrated by a rereading of the Propoetides story which forms part of Orpheus' song, and which serves as an introduction to the tale of Pygmalion and his *puella* in book ten. The structure of the narrative may even be seen to open up a space between the character and perspective of external poet-narrator and the character and perspective of the internal narrator. The narrative may be then seen to invite rereading and revision, as the reader is presented with a story that has at least two narrators – Orpheus, the poet of book ten and Ovid, the poet of the *Metamorphoses* – encouraging the reader to engage in a form of (at least) 'double reading'.[40]

Received readings of the *Metamorphoses*, however, often resist this plurality, and seek instead to emphasise the unity of the text, its themes, narratives and narrators. Joseph Solodow's reading of the poem displays just such an emphasis, suggesting that the text is unified by its central concern with art and artists (although it might be argued that these are rather Joseph Solodow's central concerns). He suggests that the poem's various internal narrators represent variations in the authoritative voice of 'Ovid' the single, and unified external narrator and author.[41]

From this perspective, the potentially different focalization offered by two narrators telling the 'same' story can be obscured. As a fellow artist, Orpheus is regarded as Ovid's representative; the distinction between Orpheus and Ovid as internal and external narrators of book ten of the *Metamorphoses* is blurred, and the figure of Orpheus is equated with that of Ovid. In keeping with this propensity towards unification, the same privilege is subsequently extended to Pygmalion – like Orpheus, another misogynist artist. Leach maps clear parallels between the figures of Orpheus and Pygmalion:[42]

> Both in his piety an in his art Pygmalion is similar to Orpheus, and the

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[40] Cf. Cahoon 1996, 46
[41] Solodow 1988
[42] For readings of the *Metamorphoses* highlighting this elision Cf. Rosati 1983, 64-73; Knox 1986 61-63; Solodow 1988; and Barchiesi 1989.

> story appears to serve as Orpheus' own wish-projection as the one love story that he finds ideal in its embodiment of the final lover's triumph that he himself failed to sustain. His apparent identification with his own protagonist shows how his inclinations are tending from a dissatisfying dedication to art towards a gratifying love.

The three male figures of Ovid, Orpheus and Pygmalion are seen to share a unified perspective in and towards the text, a perspective, moreover, that the 'informed' or 'ideal' reader is similarly expected to adopt. Thus, in the brief story relating the metamorphosis of the Propoetides in book ten, the external narrator's perspective – the perspective to which received readings attribute the greatest authority – can become elided into the perspective of Orpheus and Pygmalion, a perspective characterised by misogyny.[43]

A review of the narrative relating the story of the *obscenae Propoetides* suggests that the image of the Propoetides represented here is very much the representation that Pygmalion himself might offer of those women: a representation characterised by condemnation and disgust. The women are prejudged – and the reader's perspective thus prejudiced – by the epithet *obscenae*. From a critical perspective that unifies Pygmalion, Orpheus and Ovid the women are always already prostitutes, the 'obscene' Propoetides even before their metamorphosis.[44]

> sunt tamen obscenae Venerem Propoetides ausae
> esse negare deam; pro quo sua numinis ira
> corpora cum fama primae uulgasse feruntur,
> utque pudor cessit, sanguisque induruit oris,
> in rigidum paruo silicem discrimine uersae.
> quas quia Pygmalion aeuum per crimen agentis
> uiderat, offensus uitiis, quae plurima menti
> femineae natura dedit, sine coniuge caelebs
> uiuebat thalamique diu consorte carebat.

But the obscene Propoetides dared to deny the divinity of Venus;
in return for which, through the anger of the goddess

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[43] Leach 1974, 123. Like Pygmalion, Orpheus is also famed for his attempt to use his artistic powers to bring a woman to life, although his attempt to bring Euridyce 'back to life' is less successful.

[44] To some degree, all perspectives may be regarded as prejudiced. There is no neutral position from which to view or read. Cf Goldhill 1991, 268

they are said to have been the first to prostitute their bodies
and their reputations
and as their modesty receded, and the blood of their faces hardened,
they turned, with little change, into hard stone.
Because Pygmalion had seen these women living their lives of shame,
offended by the vices which nature had given so generously
to the female mind, he lived celibately without a wife,
and for a long time lacked a partner for his bed.

*Met.*10.238-246

While some readers of the *Metamorphoses* might consider the sympathies and prejudices of the author to be focalized through the figures of Orpheus and Pygmalion, this is not the only viewpoint from which this story may be read; alternative perspectives are available. Attempts to map clear, linear correlations between good/bad and sympathetic/unsympathetic characters are problematic in this narrative, and it is not necessary that a reader should identify *with* Orpheus and Pygmalion *against* the Propoetides. The misogynist perspective displayed by both Orpheus and Pygmalion may be regarded as an extreme point of view that the external narrator invites his readers to resist.[45]

Some indication that the misogynistic rejection of womankind by both Orpheus and Pygmalion is to be regarded as unreasonable is suggested by the story of Venus and the Cerastae. Just as the story of the Propoetides serves to frame the story of Pygmalion and his *puella*, the story of the Cerastae (*Met.*10.220-237) serves to introduce and, in a sense, to frame them both.[46] The horned Cerastae offend Venus by impiously sacrificing *hospites* at the altar of *Iouis Hospitis*. Venus' immediate response is to abandon her Cypriot people, condemning them all for the crimes of a few, but she reconsiders and punishes only the Cerastae, turning them into savage bulls (*Met.*10.237 *grandiaque in toruos transformat membra iuuencos*). However, unlike Venus, who recognises that the complete rejection of an entire group of people based on the desire to punish or avoid some

[45] The familiar term *feruntur* appears in the narrative at line 240 and may be seen to mitigate the responsibility of both the internal and external narrators for their re-presentation of this story.
[46] Ahl 1985, 250-51 maps a complex system of linguistic 'metaformation' that identifies the CERAstae as people of horn - from the Greek *keras* (by association, like Pygmalion's ivory statue), and of wax - from the Latin *cera* (by association, like Pygmalion's statue as it softens like Hymettian wax and comes to life).

of them is unreasonable, both Orpheus and Pygmalion unfairly condemn all women on the basis of their experience of a few.

The reader's sympathy for Orpheus and Pygmalion is also challenged by the suggestion that, in one respect, both Orpheus and Pygmalion may be seen to be just as 'guilty' of inappropriate sexual behaviour as the Propoetides: in their rejection of the opposite sex, they appear to 'dare to deny the divinity of Venus'[47] by avoiding members of the opposite sex no less than the Propoetides. The harsh condemnation of these women and the implied justification of their final punishment in this narrative might therefore be seen to present a distorted view of their character and of their crime, perhaps as a pre-figuration of the distorted perspective from which Pygmalion is later to view his statue. For while the Propoetides are apparently condemned in this narrative for their lustfulness and obscene behaviour as prostitutes, the text offers the observation that their prostitution was not caused by 'those vices which nature had given so generously to the female mind' (*Met.*10.244f - *uitiis, quae plurima menti / femineae natura dedit*) as Pygmalion seems to believe, but was rather reportedly the *punishment* inflicted upon them by Venus for their slight towards her (*Met.*10.238-240 – *pro quo... feruntur*). Indeed, Kenney emphasises Venus' role in this first element of the Propoetides' metamorphosis by highlighting the novelty of this transformation in his description of the goddess as 'the inventor of prostitution'.[48]

Moreover, while the text makes it clear that the first transformation of the Propoetides into prostitutes is the work of the goddess, the second transformation of the women into stones is not directly attributed to any external or divine force. There is a distinct equivocation in the text's description of this final transformation, where *versae* is ambiguous in terms of agency. Although passive in form, its significance is open to interpretation: here *versae* may be compared to a Greek 'middle' and translated accordingly to suggest that the women 'turned *themselves*' into stone, such equivocation highlighting the weakness of appeals to the authority of the text or the poet-narrator for the determination of absolute or final meaning.[49]

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[47] Cf. Orpheus at *Met.*10.79f '*omnemque refugerat Orpheus / femineam Venerem*' and Pygmalion at *Met.*10.244-246.

[48] Kenney 1986, 434: 'Venus takes her place as the inventor of prostitution, Ovid giving a characteristic twist to the notorious fact that Cyprus was a famous centre of sacred harlotry.'

[49] Sharrock 1991b, 172 highlights a similar equivocation in the syntax of *moueri* in the story of Pygmalion and his *puella* (*Met.*10.251).

The second metamorphosis of the Propoetides may be seen, then, not as a punishment, but as a kind of self-transformation, the women hardening themselves as a result of the lives they are forced to lead until they eventually become as hard (as) stones.[50] A strong reading of the story might even see this second (self)transformation of the Propoetides as a reaction by the women against their punishment and against Venus who is notorious for her hatred of the hard of heart - *dura pectora.*[51] Furthermore, while this second metamorphosis may be seen to emphasise and to exaggerate the pre-existing hardness of these women – a common feature of transformation in the *Metamorphoses,* in which change also signals continuity – their first transformation is figured very differently, as a punishment. Yet for precisely what crime the women are punished is not clear from the narrative. The women 'deny Venus' - but the form of this denial is not made explicit. Received readings of the story usually assume that the women offend Venus by practising prostitution , but as Jane Miller observes:[52]

> According to Herodotus 1.199 and Athenaeus 12.516a, temple-prostitution was frequently practised in Cyprus as a form of worship and was considered an act of piety. Behaving as a prostitute would not, then, constitute a denial of Venus.

If the Propoetides were to practise prostitution illegitimately, that is, outside of the religious context of the temple, then their behaviour might be considered to constitute a denial of the goddess.[53] Yet, a more plausible interpretation of the story might be that the women deny Venus by living in celibacy and abstaining from sex, so Venus appropriately punishes them by inflicting a life of prostitution and an excess of sex upon them.

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[50] Bauer 1962, lists a number of examples from the *Metamorphoses* (including Anaxarete and Echo) associating the transformation of women into stone with sexual abstinence, frigidity, and hard-heartedness. This association supports the assertion in this reading of the story of the Propoetides that the women were not punished by Venus for sexual excess but for abstinence.

[51] Vertumnus attempts to persuade Pomona to yield to his advances by telling her the story of the hard-hearted Anaxarete. He warns her to remember the gods of vengeance, the anger of Nemesis, and Venus - who hates the hard of heart (*Met.*14.693f. *ultoresque deos et pectora dura perosam / Idalien memoremque time Rhamnusidis iram*).

[52] Miller 1988, 205.

[53] Miller cites Dörrie 1974, 13, in support of this view of the Propoetides: 'They performed the act, which was required within the temple grounds by the orders of the gods, outside and without orders, undoubtedly for their own profit.' If this view were accepted it would, perhaps, posit the Propoetides as even more interesting and relevant subjects for re-appropriation by the resisting reader.

Resistance

An apparently similar form of punishment for an apparently similar type of crime is inflicted by Venus in the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes, also narrated in book 10. Venus 'herself' - as an internal narrator within the narrative of internal narrator Orpheus - tells Adonis how she punished Atalanta and Hippomenes for failing to show her proper respect:

> 'dignane, cui grates ageret, cui turis honorem
> ferret, Adoni, fui? nec grates inmemor egit,
> nec mihi tura dedit. subitam conuertor in iram,
> contemptuque dolens, ne sim spernenda futuris,
> exemplo caueo meque ipsa exhortor in ambos:
> templa, deum Matri quae quondam clarus Echion
> fecerat ex uoto, nemorosis abdita siluis,
> transibant, et iter longum requiescere suasit;
> illic concubitus intempestiua cupido
> occupat Hippomenen a numine concita nostro.

Surely I was worthy, Adonis, to be paid thanks and to be offered
the honour of incense? But, thoughtless, he neither paid me thanks
nor offered me incense. I was turned to sudden anger,
hurt by his contempt, and so that I might not be spurned so in the future,
I took the warning of this example and spurred myself against them both.
They were passing by a temple hidden in the shady woods,
which the famous Echion had once had built for the mother of the gods,
to fulfil a vow, and the long journey persuaded them to rest;
there untimely lustful desire
siezed Hippomenes - roused by my divine power.

Met. 10.681-690

In this story - as in the story of the Propoetides - Venus' victims are not punished *for* any obvious form of sexual impropriety, but are rather punished for their lack of respect *by* the infliction of sexual excess and inpropriety. The lustfulness and obscene behaviour displayed by both Hippomenes and Atalanta in their desecration of a shrine sacred to Cybele is represented as their punishment for their failure to show Venus due honour. Significantly - as in the story of the Propoetides - the subsequent transformation of the couple into lions is not directly attributed to Venus, but is rather deferred, and in this case attributed to Cybele.

However, Pygmalion confuses both the sequence and the agency of the Propoetides' metamorphosis. He sees the *obscenae Propoetides* as always already prostitutes. From his prejudiced perspective, the Propoetides were turned into stone in punishment for their immodest and immoral behaviour. Their metamorphosis into stones – from animate into inanimate beings – is figured as one of 'little change' (*Met.*10.242 – *paruo discrimine)* and described in terms of their loss of modesty: the blood hardening in their veins as they lose the ability to blush, and their essential hardness of character being transformed into stone. Yet although Pygmalion's view of the Propoetides is not supported by the narrative, the trend among received readings to identify with Pygmalion – to identify Pygmalion with the author and narrator – and so to read from his perspective causes the story of the Propoetides to be commonly 'misread'.[54]

The Propoetides are regarded always and already as prostitutes and their transformation into stones is seen as their punishment for this. Charles Segal sees the metamorphosis of the Propoetides as an example of 'a stable moral center in Ovid's poem', commenting that: 'The stony-hearted Propoetides of Book 10, for example, are made literally stones as the appropriate punishment for profaning Venus' gifts by becoming the first prostitutes.'[55] Karl Galinsky is ambiguous on the causality of the Propoetides' punishment, claiming that the women were 'turned into lifeless stone because of their lack of respect for the goddess and because of their shameless and depraved love.'[56] Similarly, Eric Downing, reading the story form this perspective, collapses the temporality of the narrative to emphasise only one transformation of the Propoetides, and to attribute this to their excessive sexuality rather than to their excessive asexuality, describing them as 'women who lived out their lives in shameless unchasity and unchecked sexuality'[57] until their metamorphosis. John Elsner also regards the Propoetides from such a perspective:[58]

> The Pygmalion passage is preceded in Book 10 by the story of the Propoetides who were the first *to turn to* prostitution (240) and *were consequently turned* into stone. Pygmalion's project of turning ivory to

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[54] According to Bloom 1973, all readings are necessarily 'misreadings'. Readings may be 'strong' or 'weak' misreadings, but they may not be of equal value, use or interest.
[55] Segal 1998, 14
[56] Galinsky 1975, 87
[57] Downing 1993, 59
[58] Elsner 1991, 160, emphases mine.

> woman is directly motivated by his disgust for these women in particular and by his general hatred for the *vitia* ('crimes', 244) of the *mens feminea* ('female mind', 244f).

Elsner significantly attributes the first metamorphosis of the Propoetides – their transformation into prostitutes – to the women themselves, emphasising self-agency, even though the narrative emphasises, albeit reportedly, the agency of Venus (*Met.*10.239f – *pro quo...feruntur*). In turn, he attributes the second metamorphosis of the women into stone to Venus, even though this is not what the narrative suggests: (*Met.*10.241f – *utque pudor cessit, sanguinisque induruit oris, / in rigidum paruo silicem discrimine uersae*).

These readings, however, are not necessarily 'wrong'. If we consider the possibility that through his different focalizers Ovid scripts different perspectives in the *Metamorphoses* - even different male and female perspectives - then it is possible to see these readings as valid responses to those different viewpoints offered by the narrative. It might be suggested that these (mis)readings are emplotted in the narrative: that they are in part influenced by the focalization of the story through the figure of Orpheus, and in particular by the programmatic statement of themes declared by Orpheus at the beginning of his song (*Met* 10.148-154). The matrix of expectation formed by this declaration suggests that, in addition to stories of pederasty, Orpheus' song will tell of *puellas ignibus attonitas meruisse libidine poenam*. It might be claimed, then, that the reader is (mis)directed by Orpheus to view the story of the Propoetides as such a tale of 'girls struck by strange passions, deserving the punishment of their lust' - even though this is not what the narrative appears to represent. According to De Jong, such textual direction or misdirection is essential to the process and interpretation: 'Every narrative must have a narrator and a focalizer, whether they become "perceptible" in the text or not. We ... are always confronted with a filtered view, i.e. selection and evaluation, of the events and this filtering is due to a focalizer'.[59] The reader's perspective is biased by the filtration and focalization of this story through the figure of Orpheus, and his or her reading is consequently distorted.

Yet all readings may be regarded as necessarily incomplete and distorted by some degree of bias. A feminist re-appropriation of the story of the Propoetides (or, at least, this feminist re-appropriation of the story) demonstrates that all reading

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[59] De Jong 1987, 32-33

perspectives are biased to some extent by social contingency - including gender. It also suggests that some perspectives may be more comprehensive and more reliable than others. A reader who adopts Orpheus as her focalizer for book ten of the *Metamorphoses* should remember that he is famed for his failure to satisfy women - he disappoints both Eurydice and the Thracian women. Similarly, the reader who adopts Pygmalion as his or her primary focalizer for the story of the Propoetides should be aware that a character who takes his ivory statue to be a living woman of flesh and blood may offer a less than reliable perspective from which to view a narrative.

Reviewing Pygmalion

He puts her on a pedestal and she goes down on it.
Elizabeth Wurtzel, *Bitch*

The view of the Propoetides held by Downing and Elsner, Galinsky and Segal, *et al* appears to be compromised by the way in which their readings of this story are focalized through the eyes of Pygmalion.[60] Elsner's reading of the story emphasises the ways in which the narrative constructs an empathetic relationship between the reader and Pygmalion, highlighting a shared viewpoint, and a common desire for the statue to come to life. However, he also draws attention to the ways in which the reader's difference to Pygmalion is also affected:[61]

> Ovid begins by constructing his reader as participant in Pygmalion's desire for something which in fantasy one might hope to achieve; but in the miracle of transformation which is the very achievement of the reader's desire, the reader is metamorphosed to becoming an excluded voyuer.

Elsner identifies Pygmalion not only as a paradigm of the ideal artist, but more specifically as a paradigm of the ideal viewer and reader, describing his reading of the Pygmalion story as 'a metaphor for the reader as creator of his own narrative, his own reality, out of the text of the *Metamorphoses*'.[62] Elsner's reader of this text is clearly identified as male. His 'metaphor' is for a male reader who can identify with Pygmalion and also with Elsner himself as a reader and creator of *his* own narrative. Yet, what is particularly significant here is not Elsner's use of the male pronoun to identify the reader of the *Metamorphoses*, but rather his

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[60] Cf. Fränkel 1945, 95, who appears - like Pygmalion - to be unable to distinguish between statues and women: 'Whoever happens to be in love with an ivory woman may take these words to heart and try out Ovid's directions. The artist's hands molded the statue into life. The warm sunshine of his affection and the deft touch of his hands melted down frigidity, and, while he was acting upon her as if she would respond, she did finally respond'. Sharrock 1991a, 48 also draws attention to this detail in Fränkel. Like Fränkel, Alan Griffin 1977, 65 similarly expresses an identification with the figure of Pygmalion, apparently based on his perception of their shared experience as male heterosexual lovers: 'The pre-Ovidian version of the Pygmalion legend was much less attractive and sophisticated. Indeed, it was rather crude. Pygmalion fell in love with a statue of Venus and actually had intercourse with the statue - an uncomfortable experience one may suppose'. Does this crude appeal to physical experience exclude the woman reader from such a perspective?

[61] Elsner 1991, 166

[62] Elsner 1991, 159

assumption that the masculine experience and perspective he posits for that reader will be comprehensive and universally meaningful.

Elsner argues convincingly that Pygmalion's role as a viewer, and thus as a form of reader, in the *Metamorphoses* is of greater significance than his role as an artist, observing that the text devotes just two lines of the narrative to describe Pygmalion's act of creation (*Met.*10.247f - *interea niueum mira feliciter arte / sculpsit ebur formamque dedit, ...*) and over fifty lines to describe his viewing of the statue.[63] Yet, in identifying Pygmalion as a paradigm of the ideal viewer, Elsner does not admit that Pygmalion's powers of perception, and in particular his powers of visual perception, may be unreliable in any way, even though Pygmalion sees an image of a woman and perceives it to be a real woman, suggesting that either his eyes and his senses are deceived, or that he misinterprets what he sees and feels. Conversely, the text of the *Metamorphoses* appears to highlight the features of uncertainty and confusion that characterises Pygmalion's perception of his *puella*.

> interea niueum mira feliciter arte
> sculpsit ebur formamque dedit, qua femina nasci
> nulla potest, operisque sui concepit amorem.
> uirginis est uerae facies, quam uiuere credas,
> et, si non obstet reuerentia, uelle moueri:
> ars adeo latet arte sua. miratur et haurit
> pectore Pygmalion simulati corporis ignes.
> saepe manus operi temptantes admouet, an sit
> corpus an illud ebur, nec adhuc ebur esse fatetur.

Meanwhile, with marvellous art, he successfully carved snow-white ivory
and gave it a beauty such as no woman could be born with,
and he conceived a passion for his own work.
Its appearance is that of a real girl, whom you would think to be alive,
and to want to be moved, if modesty did not prevent it.
To such an extent is art hidden by art itself. Pygmalion is amazed
and fills his heart with desire for the artificial body.
Often he lifts his hands to the piece, testing whether it may
be flesh or ivory, and he no longer admits it to be ivory.

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[63] Elsner 1991, 155

*Met.*10.247-255

This description of the statue is appropriately ambiguous, inviting a number of different interpretations. Firstly, Pygmalion sculpts his ivory statue and 'gives it a form which no woman could have been born with'. As readers, unable to 'see' Pygmalion's statue for ourselves, we may interpret these words in a variety of ways: to mean that Pygmalion took no living woman as his model for the statue; that the appearance of the statue is artificial or unnatural; that its beauty and perfection represent a feminine ideal; that the statue represents not a mortal woman but a goddess[64] - perhaps even Venus herself, who was not born from the body of a woman, but who sprang fully formed from the sea.

We are told, moreover, that the statue 'has the face of a real girl',[65] which may similarly be read in a number of ways: to mean that the statue *is* modelled upon the figure and features of a real woman; that the statue is extremely life-like and realistic in its appearance; that the statue is *already* a woman - that the anticipated transformation of ivory into flesh has already taken place. Once more in this narrative, ambiguity and linguistic over-determination serves to express the confusion of Pygmalion at perceiving his life-like statue, as well as to disorientate the reader.

Like Pygmalion, the reader is confused by contradictory observations suggesting that the statue is at once image and flesh, unsure at the first reading precisely when the transformation of statue to woman takes place. The narrative composes an image gradually, with each new detail necessitating the reader's re-evaluation of the scene, thus challenging and undermining the reader's response to the transformation of the statue. Like the reader, Pygmalion is unsure whether his attentions are directed towards an image of a woman or towards a real woman, unsure whether her *corpus* is of ivory or flesh, as the distinction between life and

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[64] Cf. Sharrock 1991a. Sharrock draws attention to the competing discourses of the text which construct the statue as both a religious icon or cult figure and as a whore. She focuses upon the suggestions of hierogamy in an earlier version of the myth of Pygmalion, narrated by the third century BCE author Philostephanus, in which Pygmalion is not an artist but a Cretan king who falls in love with a cult image of the goddess Aphrodite, and in Ovid's narrative analyses the erotic associations of the statue's apparent desire 'to be moved' (*Met.*10.251 - *uelle moueri*) in the context of Lucretius' condemnation of such behaviour in women as the action of prostitutes (Lucretius *DRN* 4.1268-1277).

[65] Scylla is also described in such terms: *uirginis ora gerens, et, si non omnia uates / ficta reliquerunt, aliquo quoque tempore uirgo* (*Met.*13.733), suggesting a possible tension between the outwardly innocent appearance of a *uirgo* and the threat of her sexuality.

art is blurred.[66] Their focus determined by the narrative, both reader and Pygmalion then may be seen to share the same confused perspective and the same inability to distinguish between representation and reality. This common perspective is both highlighted and compromised by a key phrase employed in the description of the statue as a girl 'whom you might think to be alive' (*Met.*10.250 - *quam uiuere credas*).

This is very much the perspective that Pygmalion adopts towards his statue, and it is this perspective that the reader is also invited to share. Yet the force of *credas* is such that it emphasises the distinction between Pygmalion and the reader (to whom it is overtly directed), while its subjunctive works to further separate the two by indicating that such a perspective is incredible.[67] Pygmalion's credibility as a reliable point of focalization for this story is thus compromised and the authority of his perspective is challenged.

According to the narrative, Pygmalion himself is unwilling to believe his own interpretation of what he sees, seeking confirmation by other means.[68] Thus, amazed by what he sees but unable to trust his observations, Pygmalion attempts to determine by touch that which he was unable to determine by sight, feeling the ivory of the statue with his hands and lips.

> saepe manus operi temptantes admouet, an sit
> corpus an illud ebur, nec adhuc ebur esse fatetur. 255
> oscula dat reddique putat loquiturque tenetque
> et credit tactis digitos insidere membris
> et metuit, pressos ueniat ne liuor in artus ...

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[66] The ambiguity and confusion of the represented and the real is highlighted in the narrative by the juxtaposition of key words: *Met.*10.250 - *uerae / facies*; *Met.*10.253 - *simulati corporis*. Cf. Ahl 1985, 248 on the variety of linguistic puns on the 'real' in this passage, including *uerae, (ui)uere, re-uere(ntia), (mo)ueri.*

[67] Elsner 1991, 160, holds the opposite view: 'The second person of *credas* directly addresses the reader as a viewer of the statue and equates the reader with Pygmalion as one who might also believe'.

[68] In the *De Rerum Natura* Lucretius describes sensation as the primary standard of truth (*DRN* 4.478-481) and as the basis of perception of understanding. He also claims that the senses, such as touch and sight, each possess their own separate function and power (*DRN* 4.489-96) so that no sense can impinge upon another. On the basis of this Epicurean doctrine Lucretius claims that equal credit should be given to each sense, so that whatever seems to be true to one sense - even though it may be refuted by another - is indeed true: *nec porro poterunt ipsi reprehendere sese, / aequa fides quoniam debebit semper haberi. / proinde quod in quoquest his uisum tempore, uerumst.* (*DRN* 4.497-9). It is thus only the mind's interpretations of the senses' observations that are false.

Resistance

Often he lifts his hands to the piece, testing whether it may
be flesh or ivory, and he no longer admits it to be ivory.
He gives kisses and thinks they are returned, he speaks and holds,
and believes that fingers sink into flesh at his touch
and he fears that bruises may appear on the pressed limbs ...

*Met.*10.254-258

Pygmalion finds only further confusion in this approach, mistaking his own touch for that of the statue. The touch of his own flesh seems to feel flesh in return, he feels the touch of his lips returned in a kiss, and as his fingers press against hard ivory he fears that he himself has pressed too hard. Pygmalion's credibility is thus compromised further and his inability to offer reliable interpretations based on the observations of his senses is reiterated. In trying to make sense of his situation, Pygmalion only confuses himself further.

This confusion - in which both Pygmalion and the reader are implicated - is expressed finally in Pygmalion's prayer to the gods at the altar of Venus. Here, not daring to ask to have his ivory statue for a wife, he asks instead to have a wife like his ivory statue; unwilling to ask for one kind of representation, he elects to ask for another kind.

> constitit et timide 'si, di, dare cuncta potestis,
> sit coniunx, opto,' non ausus 'eburnea uirgo'
> dicere, Pygmalion 'similis meae' dixit 'eburnae'.

He stood at the altar and timidly spoke, 'If, gods, you can give everything,
I pray to have as a wife', not daring to say 'my ivory girl',
he said, 'one like my ivory'.

*Met.*10.274-276

Pygmalion's hesitant, disjointed speech eloquently expresses his confusion and, at this point in the narrative, his inability to make clear distinctions between representations and reality. Clearly an artist skilled in visual rather than in verbal expression, Pygmalion has more difficulty in vocalising than in focalizing his desires.

Resistance

Pygmalion's confusion may be seen to have influenced and similarly confused many of his readers. Indeed, readers privileging his male biased perspective may be seen to 'misread' the narrative as a result. Thus, Solodow, seeking to emphasise thematic links in the *Metamorphoses*, connects the story of Pygmalion with the story of the Propoetides:[69]

> The two tales appear linked one with the other by the themes of chastity and stone and flesh, which they share, yet at the same time they move in opposite directions and each is the reverse of the other.

Yet in reading these stories together and in adopting the perspective of the internal narrator who establishes the structural and thematic links between these two narratives, Solodow's focus is compromised. Pygmalion does not succeed 'in converting marble into the living flesh of a woman':[70] his statue is carved of ivory, not of stone, and is only like the Propoetides in form and appearance. Charles Segal displays a similarly compromised perspective in his analysis of the story:[71]

> Ovid's most famous treatment of the interrelations between the materiality of the body and art is his story of Pygmalion in *Metamorphoses* 10, which depicts the supreme power of the artist as the ability to give warm life to the cold marble statue. Ovid's concern here is not just the transformation of stone to flesh, but the creation of a living and responsive human being from a lifeless work of art.

Again ivory is (mis)taken for marble, in an apparent reflection of the way in which Pygmalion (mis)takes ivory for flesh (*Met.*10.254f *saepe manus operi temptantes admouet, an sit / corpus an illud ebur, nec adhuc ebur esse fatetur*): identifying with Pygmalion and adopting his point of focalization for this story appears to lead to confusion.[72]

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[69] Solodow 1988, 2

[70] ibid. Bauer 1962, 16, notes that *ebur* appears a total of six times in this story 'as if to be sure the reader noticed what the material of the statue was'. This does not seem to work.

[71] Segal 1998, 17

[72] This material distinction is subtle yet significant, for in the classical tradition ivory is often associated with deception, illusion and confusion. Elsner (1991) 162 comments on the roots of this association in Homer (*Odyssey* 19.562-65) where a play is made between *elephas* (ivory) and *elephairomai* (to deceive).

An alternative reading might seek to avoid this confusion. The resisting reader might elect to focus, not upon the figure and agency of Pygmalion, but upon that of Venus. In received readings of both stories the divine agency of Venus and her role in the transformations of the Propoetides, of Pygmalion's statue, and perhaps also of Pygmalion himself, is often downplayed. Downing, in particular, emphasises Pygmalion's agency in the transformation of his statue: 'with only *the implied complicity of Venus*, his human love transforms the lifeless imitation into a real woman of flesh and blood ...'[73]

While Pygmalion's role in the first transformation of his *puella* from ivory to statue is clearly emphasised in the narrative of this story (*Met.*10.247 – 252), his role in the second transformation of the statue into a real woman is represented in more ambiguous terms. The *festa dies Veneris* at which Pygmalion prays for a woman *like* his ivory statue is given a central position in the story and described at some length.

> festa dies Veneris tota celeberrima Cypro
> uenerat, et pandis inductae cornibus aurum
> conciderant ictae niuea ceruice iuuencae,
> turaque fumabant, cum munere functus ad aras
> constitit et timide 'si, di, dare cuncta potestis,
> sit coniunx, opto,' non ausus 'eburnea uirgo'
> dicere, Pygmalion 'similis mea' dixit 'eburnae'.
> sensit, ut ipsa suis aderat Venus aurea festis,
> uota quid illa uelint et, amici numinis omen,
> flamma ter accensa est apicemque per aera duxit.

The festival day of Venus, celebrated by the whole of Cyprus,
had come, and heifers with curving horns covered in gold
had fallen with blows to their snow-white necks,
and incense burned, when Pygmalion, having performed his duties,
stood at the altar and timidly spoke, 'If, gods, you can give everything,
I pray to have as a wife,' not daring to say 'my ivory girl',
he said, 'one like my ivory'.
Golden Venus, present herself at her own festival,
sensed what those words meant, and a flame three times flared up

[73] Downing 1993, 60, emphases mine.

and drew its tip through the air, a sign of a friendly power.

*Met.*10.270-279

Pygmalion's involvement in the festival, given his celibacy and his rejection of the female sex, is not presented in the narrative as anything particularly remarkable, as the whole of Cyprus are said to celebrate this occasion (*Met.*10.270 – *tota celeberrima Cypro).* What is remarkable, it is suggested, is that Venus herself was present at her festival (*Met.*10.277 – *ut ipsa suis aderat Venus aurea festis*), where she heard and correctly interpreted Pygmalion's prayer, an *omen* appearing which Pygmalion interprets as a clear sign of Venus' support and approval (*Met.*10.278 – *amici numinis omen).* Yet the precise nature and context of golden Venus' presence at her festival is represented in rather ambiguous terms. Since the focalization of this episode is so complex, even Venus' *omen* may not necessarily be seen as ' the sign of a friendly power' which Pygmalion perceives it to be.[74] Moreover, the conventional epithet *aurea,* in this context, may suggest that Venus' presence is not necessarily 'personal', but rather that she is represented at her festival by a golden cult statue, and that it is in this form that she hears and responds to Pygmalion. It is significant that the description of Venus' response to Pygmalion's prayer (*Met.*10.277 – *sensit*) is expressed in the same way as the response of Pygmalion's statue upon awakening to his kiss (*Met.*10.293 – *sensit*).[75]

The narrative is similarly ambiguous in its account of Pygmalion's return to his *simulacra puellae.*

> ut rediit, simulacra suae petit ille puellae
> incumbensque toro dedit oscula: uisa tepere est;
> admouet os iterum, manibus quoque pectora temptat:
> temptatum mollescit ebur positoque rigore
> subsidit digitis ceditque, ut Hymettia sole
> cera remollescit tractataque pollice multas
> flectitur in facies ipsoque fit utilis usu.
> dum stupet et dubie gaudet fallique ueretur,

[74] Perhaps Pygmalion, like the other focalizers in this story (and in this reading) sees what he wants to see.

[75] It might be suggested that *aurea Venus* is represented here as a 'living statue' who interacts with Pygmalion - with particular significance for this reading of the story in which another such 'living statue' is subsequently seen to interact with Pygmalion.

rursus amans rursusque manu sua uota retractat.
corpus erat. saliunt temptatae pollice uenae.
tum uero Paphius plenissima concipit heros
uerba, quibus Veneri grates agat, oraque tandem
ore suo non falsa premit, dataque oscula uirgo
sensit et erubuit timidumque ad lumina lumen
attollens pariter cum caelo uidit amantem.
coniugio, quod fecit, adest dea, iamque coactis
cornibus in plenum nouiens lunaribus orbem
illa Paphon genuit, de qua tenet insula nomen.

When he returns, he seeks the image of his girl
and, leaning over the bed, he gave kisses: she seemed warm;
he moves his mouth to hers again and touches her breast with his hand:
the ivory softens at his touch and, the hardness gone,
yields to his fingers, melting just as Hymettian wax
softens in the sun, moulded by a thumb,
is turned into many forms and is made usable by use itself.
While he is amazed and hesitantly rejoices, fearing that he is deceived,
again and again the lover tests his desire with his hand.
She was flesh. Veins pulse against the touch of his thumb.
Then indeed, the Paphian hero pours out copious words
with which he gives thanks to Venus, and at last he presses
with his own mouth
a mouth no longer false, and the girl felt the kisses given to her
and blushed, and raising her timid eyes to the light,
saw the sky and her lover at the same time.
The goddess is present at the marriage which she had made
and now, when the moon filled her crescent nine times
the girl gave birth to Paphos, from whom the island takes its name.

*Met.*10.280-297

When Pygmalion returns home to his *puella* after the festival, she *already* seems warm to his touch, the transformation of ivory into flesh already having begun in his absence. Touching the statue, as its hardness softens (*Met.*10.283-6), Pygmalion appears to be reluctant to admit the reality of the transformation, responding to his *puella* as though she were still a work of art, and he her creator;

the simile employed to describe Pygmalion's touch suggesting that he touches the body of his beloved not as a lover touches the body of a woman but as a sculptor moulds wax. Then, when Pygmalion realises that the metamorphosis is 'real', he pours out his thanks to Venus for granting him his prayer (*Met.*10.291), clearly locating the agency of the transformation with Venus.

The agency of Venus is similarly highlighted at the climactic moment of the statue's vivification. When Pygmalion's *puella* opens her eyes to see, although she sees Pygmalion as her whole world, and although the pun on sky / engraving- tool in *caelo* offers a reminder that, in a sense, she sees *with his tool* (*Met.*10.294 - *pariter cum caelo uidit amantem*), evidence for the influence of Venus is maintained. For it is reported that as Pygmalion's *puella* opens her eyes, she sees him as her *amans*. And finally, when his *puella* eventually opens her eyes and Pygmalion's desire is fulfilled, the agency of Venus is emphasised again as the narrative relates that she graces with her presence the union which *she had made* (*Met.*10.295 – *coniugio, quod fecit, adest dea*).

Although the resisting reader may emphasise the agency of Venus over and above that of Pygmalion, Venus plays only a limited role in this narrative and is not an active focalizer, restricting the degree to which the resisting reader can view the story from her perspective. The female perspective and agency emphasised in this reading of the *Metamorphoses* is not, however, limited to the figure of Venus, but may also be extended to Pygmalion's statue-woman whose power to see and to interpret what she sees bears particular significance for the resisting reader. Her successful transformation from statue to woman is indicated in the text by the key verb *sensit* (*Met.* 10.293f – *sensit et erubuit timidumque ad lumina lumen / attollens pariter cum caelo uidit amantem*), emphasising a shift in focus at this point in the narrative from the sensations experienced by Pygmalion, to those experienced by his *puella.* The look that the statue-turned-woman offers back to her creator as she comes to life represents the defining point of her vivification.

By positing this awakening look as the climax of the statue's metamorphosis into a real woman, and – more importantly – by describing it, not from Pygmalion's point of view, but from that of the woman herself, the narrative offers more than the recognition that the statue has come to life. To have seen her eyes open from Pygmalion's perspective would have shown the woman to be 'life-like', but to see through her eyes – to see as she does – shows the woman to possess the potential for perceiving and interpreting the world as a living, viewing subject. Moreover,

it is the power of vision, of focalization, that is attributed to the statue-woman at the moment of her vivification which offers the resisting reader the potential to see from her perspective, and so to review and to reread the story differently.

In received readings of the *Metamorphoses* Pygmalion's *puella* is seen as a passive object – both as a statue and as a woman. Her status as a passive object to be manipulated by Pygmalion is maintained even after her metamorphosis, the transformation of *eburna* to *puella* perceived as a transformation from 'art-object' to 'love-object'. Thus, Alison Sharrock sees little difference between the statue and the woman.[76]

> Pygmalion plays out to the full the fantasy of creation. He creates a 'living' statue which really does come to life, in a vivification which nevertheless maintains the creator's control. Even Eburna's fertility is no more than an extension and another aspect of Pygmalion's creativity.

She suggests that there is little change in the metamorphosis of statue to woman, claiming that, 'in the final metamorphosis Eburna becomes even more like an automaton: she now really does move, and gives birth, but she seems barely more alive than she was as a statue'.[77] Such a reading may highlight the role of Pygmalion's *puella* in Ovid's story, but it does so from a perspective that sees her solely as a passive representation, not as an active subject. This reading at least provides Pygmalion's *puella* with a name and thus an identity – of sorts. However, the name 'Eburna' reminds us constantly that this is no ordinary woman of flesh and blood, but an image of woman created by Pygmalion from ivory. Although Pygmalion's *puella* is not named in Ovid's narrative, the significance of her role in the story and her active subjectivity is not necessarily less than that of Pygmalion.[78] Elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses* the names of central characters are supressed, without this effecting the status of their subjectivity: Callisto, for example, is never named in the account of her rape by Jupiter, her transformation into a bear, and subsequent apotheosis.[79]

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[76] Sharrock 1991a

[77] Sharrock 1991a, 174

[78] Barthes claims that nameless characters in a narrative lack such subjectivity: they are significant only as 'figurants'. He suggests that, without a name, a character lacks personality and destiny: 'the chief characteristic of a *figurant* is silence'. Cf. Barthes 1974, 68

[79] *Met* 2.401-530. She is described as *uirgine Nonacrina; miles Phoebes; uirgo; puella; Parrhasis; adultera; dea* - but never named directly as Callisto. Kenney 1986, 387, suggests that: 'her anonymity helps to gloze over an inconsistency in the chronology adopted by Ovid, for being a daughter of Lycaon she had no business to have survived the Flood'. However, this is scarcely plausible, as the narrative does make clear, if indirect, reference to her father: *Met* 2.495, 496, 526.

However, if the reader elects to focus not upon Pygmalion but upon his *puella* the metamorphosis of statue to woman may be perceived rather differently. Instead, of assuming that the transformation marks a change from passive art-object to passive love-object as the statue-woman responds to Pygmalion, consideration may also be given to the ways in which Pygmalion responds to his *puella*. Thus, the operations and representations of female agency may be privileged over those of the male, with emphasis being given to the ways in which the statue may be seen to shape the artist, and in which the beloved may be seen to influence the lover.

So what kind of woman is Pygmalion's *puella*? To what extent might she be seen as more than just 'Pygmalion's' *puella*? Athough Pygmalion is the sole creator of his statue, he does not necessarily have full authority over his work. The statue is not born from his body and is not of his flesh: in this respect the statue is like Venus, who is not born from the body of any woman, but is produced fully formed from the sea.[80] Instead, she is fashioned from ivory – an ambiguous material with apparently contradictory associations. A material connecting *natura* and *ars*: ivory is a 'natural' material like stone, wood and bone and also a material favoured by artists and craftsmen for their work. Ivory is also a material that may be seen to connect the living with the dead,[81] and the animate with the inanimate, being a material that was once an apparently inanimate part of a living animal.

In classical literature ivory was commonly associated with the liminal and transgressive, as Ovid's description of the ivory doors (*Met.*4.185 *ualuas ... eburnas*) to the bedroom in which Venus and Mars are caught *in flagrante* by Vulcan and the other Olympians suggests.[82] Yet it is not only the elements of liminality and (sexual) transgression, but also the element of revelation[83] in this

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Other nameless characters in the *Metamorphoses* include the daughter of Erysicthon (*Met.*8.843-878)who possesses the protean power to change her form at will. However, a more notorious example of an unnamed central character might be adduced in Horace's 'Cleopatra Ode, in which the Egyptian queen is nameless, but is hardly a 'figurant': she is unnamed because she is 'unspeakable': her namelessness an indication of her power. Cf. Martindale 1993, 12

[80] In other versions of the myth Pygmalion's statue is represented as a statue of the goddess Aphrodite rather than of a woman. For discussions of alternative versions of the myth see Elsner 1991, 154-159 and Sharrock 1991a, 169-173.

[81] Cf. Elsner 1991, 162-3 and Leach 1974, 123. In Virgil's account of Aeneas' descent into Hell in *Aeneid* 6.893-98, one of the two gates of Sleep is of ivory.

[82] Elsner 1990 lists other classical references to ivory doors and gates, including the gates for dreams (*Ody.*19.562-67) and the gates of Sleep (*Aen.*6.893-898).

[83] However, this association of ivory with revelation may also be seen to signify an inverse association with concealment: before they are opened, the ivory doors conceal Venus' infidelity.

context which may be seen to be of particular significance. For just as the ivory doors in this story open to reveal hidden infidelity and disgrace (*Met.*4.185-187 *Lemnius extemplo ualuas patefecit eburnas / inmisitque deos; illi iacere ligati / turpiter, ...*), so elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses* ivory offers a key to revelation. Thus, Thisbe finds her dying lover Pyramus and upon seeing her own bloody cloak and her lover's ivory scabbard empty of its sword she realises what has happened (*Met.*4.147-149 *quae postquam uestemque suam cognouit et ense / uidit ebur uacuum, 'tua te manus' inquit 'amorque / perdidit, infelix!*). Similarly, it is by the ivory hilt of Theseus' sword that his father recognises him as his son and spares his life (*Met.*7.421-423 *sumpserat ignara Theseus data pocula dextra, / cum pater in capulo gladii cognouit eburno / signa sui generis facinusque excussit ab ore*).

These examples also serve to illustrate that, in the classical tradition, ivory is usually associated with small artefacts such as scabbards or sword hilts[84] carved from a single piece of ivory; larger objects must be made up of smaller pieces of ivory or 'veneered' to give an impression of solidity - as in the construction of chryselephantine cult statues in which gold leaf and ivory veneer were employed.[85] Thus, it seems that Pygmalion's statue would, of neccesity, have been a composite figure made up of smaller pieces of ivory; the text's description of the artist carving a figure from snowy ivory (*Met.*10.247f *interea niueum mira feliciter arte / sculpsit ebur*) suggests that the statue was not 'encased' in ivory but carved from it. However, as Bömer[86] observes, a single piece of ivory would not be large enough to carve into a life-size statue of a woman. Pygmalion's ivory statue, it seems, is a complex construction.

The association of ivory, meanwhile, with the characteristics of deception and ambiguity, and with revelation and concealment suggests that Pygmalion's ivory statue may herself embody some of these characteristics. She may be seen to retain some of the characteristics of contradiction, deception and illusion associated with the material from which she was formed, just as the men that are formed from the stones cast by Deucalion and Pyrrha (*Met.*1.405-6) are seen to retain some form of stony hardness in their new shape.

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[84] In the *Metamorphoses* Atalanta also has a quiver made of ivory (*Met.* 8.320).

[85] In this context it is significant to note the associations between the story of Pygmalion and Midas (*Met.* 11.85-193). Midas may be seen as an 'anti-Pygmalion' in that his touch turns living men and women into statues of gold. Otis 1970, 192f, suggests that 'Pygmalion is the artist rewarded; Midas is the philistine punished or stigmatized'.

[86] Bömer 1980, 98f comments upon the history of chryselephantine statuary in classical art.

Resistance

The statue is not only a *dura puella*, however, and ivory is not the only material with which she is associated. The image of softening wax as a simile for the vivification of Pygmalion's statue (*Met.*10.285) offers a potentially significant allusion to Pygmalion's continuing efforts to shape and control his *puella* as she becomes a 'real' woman, as well as suggesting the inadequacy of such attempts. Wax is a material, like ivory, associated with both nature and art, as a naturally occurring substance employed in antiquity for casting statues and for coating writing tablets.[87]

In the *Metamorphoses* the softening and melting of wax often has negative connotations: suggesting, perhaps, that the vivification of Pygmalion's *puella* may be seen as a less than entirely positive metamorphosis. Icarus famously flies too near the sun and loses his false wings and his life (*Met.*8.225-227 *rapidi uicinia solis / mollit odoratas, pennarum uincula, ceras; / tabuerant cerae...*)[88], while Narcissus himself melts away, destroyed by his unrequited desire (*Met.*3.487-490 *sed ut intabescere flauae / igne leui cerae matutinaque pruinae / sole tepente solent, sic attenuatus amore / liquitur et tecto paulatim carpitur igni;*). In a more positive context, Pythagoras describes the transmigration of the human spirit and its ability to retain its essential identity while appearing in different forms as being akin to wax, which can be moulded into different shapes but remains the same wax (*Met.*15.169-172 *utque nouis facilis signatur cera figuris / nec manet ut fuerat nec formam seruat eandem, / sed tamen ipsa eadem est, anumum sic semper eandem / esse, sed in uarias doceo migrare figuras*).

This philosophical comparison of the character of an individual with wax is more usually associated in the classical literary tradition with the character formation and development of children. Children were considered, like wax, to be 'soft' in both character and body while still young, and therefore easily influenced: their

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[87] The association of Woman, and in particular the female body, with wax tablets in antiquity is attested by Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica* 2.45: 'In dreams, a writing tablet signifies a woman, since it receives the imprint of all kinds of letters'. It could be suggested that the character of Pygmalion's *puella* is similarly 'imprinted' by her creator (and her readers). A similar identification of the female body as a site of 'writing' and signification is often made in contemporary accounts of gender and representation. Cf. Doane 1988, 221: 'the female body becomes an absolute *tabula rasa* of sorts: anything and everything can be written on it'; and Gubar 1982, 73 who cites the myth of Pygmalion in her account of 'The blank page and female creativity'.

[88] The description offered in this narrative of Icarus playing with a ball of wax as his father works is presented in similar terms to those in which Pygmalion 'plays' with his statue: *flauam modo pollice ceram / molliabat lususque suo mirabile patris / impediebat opus.* (*Met.*8.198-200). Cf. *ut Hymettia sole / cera remollescit tractataque pollice multas / flectitur in facies ipsoque fit utilis usu.* (*Met* 10.284-86).

identities formed or deformed - physically, spiritually and socially - before they became firm and less impressionable with age. Holman notes that,[89]

> The malleable properties of wax made it a common literary image in antiquity for describing the constructive character formation that began in infancy. Plato's Athenian wished it possible to legislate that children 'while still soft, shall be molded like wax' (*Laws* 789E).

The image of softening wax as a simile for the vivification of Pygmalion's statue then, may be seen to suggest a relationship between Pygmalion and his *puella* that is akin to that of parent and child. Pygmalion's 'child' is not like other children, however. She begins life 'hard' - in both character and body - but it is at this stage in her development that she is moulded by Pygmalion into his image of the perfect woman. As she comes to life she becomes softer, but it is at this stage that Pygmalion's influence upon her appears to be weakened.

The characterisation of wax and ivory as ambiguous materials associated with both *ars* and *natura* further suggests that Pygmalion's *puella* may only appear be the 'perfect woman' that her artist-lover expects. For Pygmalion, improper female sexual behaviour is associated with the natural. He perceives immodesty and immorality to be an essential quality of womankind. He rejects living women like the Propoetides and turns to his artificial *puella* explicitly because of 'the vices that nature places in such abundance in the minds of women' (*Met.*10.244f). Pygmalion sees the immodesty and immorality of the 'obscene' Propoetides as the work of nature, and so he attempts to create his own entirely artificial woman in the hope of thus possessing a woman free of such natural vices.[90]

Curiously, the statue appears to convince Pygmalion of her difference to the Propoetides by her 'hardness'. So the statue's 'hardness' towards Pygmalion, which in style might be seen as that of the elegiac *puella dura*,[91] is interpreted by

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[89] Holman 1997, 80. Holman describes wax as 'the *tabula rasa* of antiquity.

[90] Elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses* the association (or confusion) of *ars* and *natura* may result in death and destruction. Cf. The grotto in which Actaeon offends Diana: ... *est antrum nemorale ... / arte laboratum nulla: simulauerat artem / ingenio natura suo;* ... (*Met.*3.157-159); and also the fateful wings which Daedalus fashions for himself and his son: ... *ignotas animum dimittit in artes / naturamque novat... / tum lino medias et ceris alligat imas / atque ita conpositas paruo curuamine flectit, / ut ueras imitetur aues.* (*Met.* 8.188-89, 193-95).

[91] Cf. Tibullus 1.1.64, Propertius 1.7.6, Ovid *Am.*1.9.19. In the *Metamorphoses* another Cretan girl - like Pygmalion's *puella* - Anaxarete is depicted in the style of a conventional elegiac *puella dura* (*Met.*14.698-761). Vertumnus tells her story to soften the heart of his own *puella dura* - Pomona (*Met.*14.696f - ... *referam tota notissima Cypro / facta, quibus flecti facile et mitescere*

him as a virtue, even though the same 'hardness' displayed by the Propoetides is interpreted by Pygmalion as a vice and as a sign of their corruption. The resistance with which Pygmalion's puella responds to his attempts to buy her attention is interpreted by him as an indication of her difference from Propoetides, emphasising her modesty and chastity in refusing to yield to him, despite the wealth of gifts that he offers: unlike the Propoetides, her body cannot be bought. Indeed the statue, while still only hard ivory and therefore – like the Propoetides – unable to blush,[92] nevertheless, is somehow able to convince her creator-lover of her modesty and her *reuerentia:* that quality which makes her appear to resist 'wanting to be moved' (*Met.*10.250f *credas...uelle moueri*).

Yet if the statue is unable to blush, then how is this modesty, this *reuerentia* demonstrated - by *natura* or by *ars*? How is Pygmalion to tell that his statue represents the perfect woman he desires and not the *obscenae Propoetides* whose prostitution inspired his project? As Susan Griffin describes, distinctions between the 'doll', the prostitute and the 'proper lady' are easily elided. She suggests that:[93]

> prostitutes are paid not only to render physical pleasure but to play roles - to, in fact, impersonate women and to create the illusion that they will willingly serve, even passionately desire, the man who buys them. But the behaviour dictated by the etiquette for proper ladies is equally doll-like. The very posture of her body is arranged like a mannequin by custom.

If the distinctions between these ostensibly different female forms are so readily confused, then how does Pygmalion know that the nature of his statue is any different to that of the Propoetides?

As Ovid's own *Ars Amatoria* demonstrates, *ars* and *natura* are not so easily to be separated. In the role of *praeceptor Amoris*, Ovid claims that it is merely a matter of convention that men pursue women and suggests that according to their nature women might more readily play the role of pursuer than pursued. (*Ars.*1.269-282). Instead, he claims that women employ *ars* to conceal *natura:* resisting the

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possis).

[92] Subsequently, the statue's awakening blush at the kiss offered by Pygmalion is seen by him as a sign of her genuine and natural modesty, a sign that she is nothing at all like the Propoetides.

[93] Griffin 1981, 45. Griffin's description of the pornographic 'doll' as a 'copy of a woman, made to replace a woman, and to give a man pleasure without the discomfort of female presence' (40) could be readily applied to Pygmalion's doll-like *puella.*

attentions of their lovers with a pretence of modesty, playing a role in order that their natural immodesty and eagerness for a lover may be at once concealed and satisfied. Is this then the type of *ars* which Pygmalion's artificial woman may be seen to adopt in her resistance to Pygmalion' attentions, as she aims to conceal and to satisfy her natural desires by playing the role of a modest lover, allowing Pygmalion to make the first move, and then resisting his advances? As a woman of *ars*, might Pygmalion's *puella* – as both statue and woman – be seen to act towards her lover according to the advice offered by Ovid in his *Ars Amatoria*? Might the codes and conventions of the elegiac lovers' discourse offer a context in which Pygmalion's *puella dura* may be seen as an active subject?

Ostensibly a passive object for most of the narrative, Pygmalion's *puella* is restricted in the ways in which she may express her autonomy or subjectivity. As a statue she is silent and unmoving and even as a woman she has no voice and is seen to move only her eyes. Nevertheless, her physical presence - perhaps her most significant feature - is very powerful, convincing Pygmalion that she is a real woman. Lacking the power to speak or to move, Pygmalion's *puella*, as statue and as woman, may be seen to express herself in the only way open to her: with her body. She may be seen to employ 'body language' familiar from the elegiac lover's discourse - the glance, the blush, the kiss - to communicate with Pygmalion, and perhaps also with the reader.

Although Ovid devotes the third book of his *Ars Amatoria* to women, his *praecepta* to the female sex assumes that the role of a woman in love is not active, as a lover, but passive, as the beloved. Indeed, the *praeceptor Amoris* claims: 'I will teach in what way a woman should be loved' (*Ars.*3.28 *femina praecipiam quo sit amanda modo*). Women appear to be granted only indirect authority and control over their lovers by the control that they exercise upon themselves through the modification of their appearance and behaviour. Thus a kind of self-transformation is urged upon the woman who would be loved. She is advised to turn herself into a work of art. As part of his advice on how to affect this self-transformation, the *praeceptor* even suggests that statues might provide her with inspiration:[94]

> quae nunc nomen habent operosi signa Myronis
> pondus iners quondam duraque massa fuit ...

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[94] Cf. Downing 1993, 64 on the *praeceptor* of the *Ars* as ' "anti-Pygmalion" with a vengeance' on this point.

Those statues of prolific Myron which are now famous
were once hard stones and lifeless lumps ...

Ars.3.219-20

Having succeeded in this metamorphosis, having *turned herself* into a statuesque work of art, she must then continue her act of mimesis by transforming her character and her behaviour to suit the individual men that she may find herself with. The *praeceptor* advises women: 'Also look at the use to which each of us is suited' *(Ars*.3.529f – *uos quoque, de nobilis quemquisque erit aptus ad usum / inspicite).* In accordance with the rules of decorum, a woman should suit herself to her man.

Already a work of art, the ivory of nature improved by *ars*, Pygmalion's *puella* has only to affect a minor transformation in character and behaviour in order to make herself *apta* to the character of her creator and lover: she is able to affect her own transformation from life-like statue to statue-like woman 'with little change'. At the beginning of the story, as a figure carved of ivory, she is hard and unfeeling, lacking any emotion, much like Pygmalion himself who hard-heartedly condemns the lustful behaviour of the Propoetides and coldly rejects the company and affection of all other women in favour of celibacy. The beauty of the statue, however, although – or possibly because – obviously contrived, attracts the artist to his own work and Pygmalion is inflamed with love for his creation. The statue, meanwhile, remains modestly impassive while suggesting by her pose the possibility of concealed emotion, properly restrained by *reverentia* – as are Pygmalion's own feelings. The apparent modesty of Pygmalion's *puella* – in both behaviour and appearance – may be seen to suit Pygmalion's own sense of modesty perfectly and, in this respect, the statue almost appears to have been modelled in Pygmalion's own image,[95] with both Pygmalion and his *puella* being described, in particular, by the adjective *timidus*.[96]

Both Pygmalion and his statue also appear to be cast in each other's reflection in their role-playing of the parts of elegiac lover and beloved. Thus, while his *puella* adopts the pose of a hard hearted elegiac mistress, Pygmalion may be seen to adopt the pose of an elegiac lover, modestly – and perhaps craftily – attempting to

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[95] On the 'narcissistic' aspects of Ovid's Pygmalion story see Rosati 1983.
[96] Cf. *Met*.10.274 and 293

win her affections. He is seen to follow the standard pattern of behaviour of the elegiac lover, attempting to woo his *puella* with indulgence and with gifts, by showing concern for her comfort, and by showering her with compliments and flattery.

saepe manus operi temptantes admouet, an sit
corpus an illud ebur, nec adhuc ebur esse fatetur.
oscula dat reddique putat loquiturque tenetque
et credit tactis digitos insidere membris
et metuit, pressos ueniat ne liuor in artus,
et modo blanditias adhibet, modo grata puellis
munera fert illi conchas teretesque lapillos
et paruas uolucres et flores mille colorum
liliaque pictasque pilas et ab arbore lapsas
Heliadum lacrimas; ornat quoque uestibus artus,
dat digitis gemmas, dat longa monilia collo,
aure leues bacae, redimicula pectore pendent:
cuncta decent; nec nuda minus formosa uidetur.
conlocat hanc stratis concha Sidonide tinctis
adpellatque tori sociam adclinatque colla
mollibus in plumis, tamquam sensura, reponit.

Often he lifts his hands to the piece, testing whether it may
be flesh or ivory, and he no longer admits it to be ivory.
He gives kisses and thinks they are returned, he speaks and holds,
and believes that fingers sink into flesh at his touch,
and he fears that bruises may appear on the pressed limbs,
and now he offers compliments, and now he brings
gifts of the kind pleasing to girls, shells and smooth stones,
and little birds and multicoloured flowers,
and lilies and coloured balls and the tears of the Heliades
that drop from trees; he dresses her limbs with clothes, too,
puts jewels on her fingers, puts long necklaces around her neck,
pearl earrings hang from her ears, headbands on her breast:
all of them suit her; but she seems no less beautiful undressed.
He lays her on coverlets dyed with Sidonian purple,
he calls her the companion of his bed and places her reclining head
upon soft feather pillows, as if she could feel them.

*Met.*10.254-269

In particular, Pygmalion's indulgence towards the statue, which he does not admit to be of ivory (*Met.*10.255), his solicitude and concern that his caresses may be too rough (*Met.*10.258); his presentation to the statue of many gifts of ever increasing value (*Met.*10.260-265); his laying of the statue upon rich coverlets and soft pillows (*Met.*10.267-269); and perhaps also in the flattery implied by the observation that the statue was beautiful dressed, but even more beautiful undressed[97] (*Met.*10.266) – all suggest that the artist Pygmalion practises the art of love as prescribed in the *Ars Amatoria*. Here, the art of love is taught to the prospective (artist) lover according to a series of guidelines, which Pygmalion appears to follow closely. These guidelines are neatly summarised by Molly Myerowitz: 'The student lover is told to woo his mistress with indulgence, compliments, persistent compliance, service, gifts, calculated flattery, and solicitude (*Ars.*2.145-336)'.[98]

Moreover as an artist of consummate skill, whose art is so realistic that it ceases to seem art, *'ars adeo latet arte sua'* (*Met.*10.252), Pygmalion's experiments in the arts of love seem to succeed. Pygmalion transforms himself from a convincing artist into a convincing lover by following the advice of the *praeceptor Amoris*:

> si latet, ars prodest: adfert deprensa pudorem,
> atque adimit merito tempus in omne fidem.
>
> If it is concealed, art succeeds: uncovered, it brings shame,
> and deservedly destroys credibility for ever.

*Ars.*2.313-314

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[97] Once again, the issue of focalization is raised by this observation (*cuncta decent; nec nuda minus formosa uidetur*): to whom should it be attributed - Pygmalion, Orpheus, or Ovid? And to what extent is the reader also implicated in such a voyeuristic view of the statue? Indeed, Pygmalion's desire for his *puella* appears to be stimulated predominantly by a visual form of eroticism: he dresses and undresses the statue for his own specular pleasure, satisfying the full range of his voyeuristic desire by elaborately adorning the statue with dresses and jewels and then removing them to appreciate his artwork *au naturelle*. Significantly, Pygmalion also seems to project his own visually stimulated form of eroticism onto the statue, initially seeking to arouse her desire for him by presenting her with an array of brightly coloured, aesthetically and visually pleasing gifts.

[98] Myerowitz 1985, 93

Resistance

But why should Pygmalion need to use the arts of love as prescribed by the *praeceptor amoris* when the object of his affections is always already his? The advice offered to the prospective artist lover in the *Ars Amatoria* is directed at an implied reader who has not yet got his hands on a suitable girl. Pygmalion has his hands on the perfect *puella* from the very start of the story, and yet he continues in the attempt to win her. Might this be because even as her creator, he has only limited influence over his *opus*?

Pygmalion's *puella* may be seen to respond convincingly with the characteristic hard-heartedness and coldness of the elegiac mistress, appearing modestly to resist his affections and attentions while suiting her behaviour to that of her lover, according to the rules of decorum as prescribed in the *Ars*.[99] Like Pygmalion, she too may be seen to follow the precepts of the *praeceptor* in order to maintain an image of *pudor* and credibility, and - as the *praeceptor* advises - she too may be seen to conceal her art. The *praeceptor* is particularly explicit in his directions to women to conceal their 'unnatural' arts, claiming that 'there is much which it is improper for men to know about; most of your things would offend if you did not hide them within (*Ars.*3.229f *multa uiros nescire decet; pars maxima rerum / offendat, si non interiora tegas*). By concealing her *ars*, Pygmalion's *puella* not only avoids causing offence to her lover - he who was so offended by the Propoetides and the natural vices of womankind that he rejected the company of all women (*Met.*10.244f *offensa uitiis, quae plurima menti / femineae natura dedit*) - but she also manages to convince him of her *pudicitia.*

For while the blush displayed by Pygmalion's *puella* at the moment of her awakening and vivification is perceived by Pygmalion to be a clear sign of his beloved's natural modesty, the *praeceptor* suggests in the *Ars Amatoria* not only that a natural looking blush may be artistically contrived by women, but also that it may be used by them to conceal their lack of natural modesty and their experience in the arts of love (*Ars.*3.200 – *sanguine quae uero non rubet, arte rubet* – those who not blush with real blood, may blush with art). The blush displayed by Pygmalion's *puella* may thus be seen, not as an unconscious response to a kiss, a sign of her natural modesty, but as a deliberate act. By concealing with artifice, her own artifice – *ars adeo latet arte sua* – she constructs a role for herself

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[99] In his role as *praeceptor Amoris* to his male readers in book one of the *Ars* Ovid also warns that women may employ a variety of wiles in their attempts to elicit presents from their lovers - notably, by pretending that it is their birthday (*Ars.*1.429f). Thus, it might be observed that in her vivification, Pygmalion's *puella* adopts a particularly novel approach in order to indicate to her lover that is her birth-day.

as a living woman, and by playing that role and by acting like a woman, the statue appears to become one.

Like the second transformation of the Propoetides, the metamorphosis of Pygmalion's *puella* may therefore be seen, at least in part, as a self-generated transformation. It is, moreover, a transformation that may be seen to parallel that of the lover in the *Ars* who, according to Ovid, may become a lover in 'reality' by pretending well enough, by playing the role of the lover so well that it ceases to be perceived as such (*Ars*1.616 – *quod incipiens finxerat esse, fuit*). By pretending to be a lover, playing a role, Pygmalion becomes a lover in 'reality'.

From this perspective, the transformation of Pygmalion's *puella* from statue to woman may be seen to reflect a similar metamorphosis from artist to lover in the figure of Pygmalion: a metamorphosis, like that of the Propoetides and of Pygmalion's statue-woman that is marked by little change. From the different perspective offered by the focalization of this metamorphosis through the figure of Pygmalion's *puella*, the extent to which Pygmalion depends upon a female influence for the shape of his own identity may be highlighted. Pygmalion's creation[100] of a woman, first as an art object and then as a love object, may be considered to involve a reciprocal relationship between artist and subject, lover and beloved.

Pygmalion creates a woman, giving her beauty and love, and makes use[101] of her, not only to prove his supreme skill as an artist, to fulfil his erotic desires, and to bear his child, but also to shape the form of his own identity. For just as he depends upon his *puella* to provide him with someone to love and to identify him as her lover, he similarly depends upon his art object to confirm his identity as an artist. So, just as the statue begins life as formless matter and is given shape and form by the artist (*Met.*10.248 - *formamque dedit*) in the first stage of her transformation into a woman, so the figure of Pygmalion may be seen to be given shape and form by his statue.

At the opening of the story he is represented as a bachelor, living alone and celibate, a female influence - in this case from the Propoetides - being responsible

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[100] Within this context it is significant that the association of artistic creation and biological conception is made by Aristotle (*DGA* 730b 21) who compares male semen to a craftsman's tool, giving human form to the flesh and blood provided by the mother, as an artist might shape a human form from stone - or ivory.

[101] Cf *Met.*10.286 *ipsoque fit utilis usu.*

for shaping even this initial form of Pygmalion's ever-changing identity. It is not until the ivory *forma* of his statue is introduced that Pygmalion is identified as an artist. Pygmalion – already a lover of sorts at the beginning of the story when he first falls in love with his work (*Met.*10.249 – *operisque sua concepit amorem*) – may be seen to play the role of a lover towards his statue so effectively that eventually he becomes her *amans* (*Met.*10.288). The agency of Pygmalion's metamorphosis from artist to lover - again, like the metamorphosis of the Propoetides and of Pygmalion's statue-woman - appears to be self-generated. Venus does not fill his heart with desire for the statue, rather Pygmalion fills his own heart with desire (*Met.*10.252f *miratur et haurit / pectore Pygmalion simulati corporis ignes*).

As his *puella* finally opens her eyes to confirm the success of her metamorphosis from inanimate statue to living woman, Pygmalion's own metamorphosis from artist to lover is similarly confirmed: 'when Pygmalion becomes a lover he sacrifices his identity as an artist'.[102] Pygmalion's *puella* identifies him not as her *auctor*, but as her *amans* (*Met.*10.294 – *pariter cum caelo uidit amantem*), the position of this word at the end of the line (effectively marking the end of the narrative - the subsequent brief account of the birth of Paphos composed as little more than a postscript) offering additional emphasis to this other transformation. The new perspective of Pygmalion's *puella* may thus be seen to mark Pygmalion's metamorphosis no less than her own. Like the men and women of the *Ars Amatoria* perhaps, Pygmalion appears externally the same, but is essentially changed, while his *puella* remains essentially the same, but is externally changed.[103]

Having resisted the view of Pygmalion's *puella* as the (misogynist's) perfect woman, a further *pièce de resistance* is required of the resisting reader. The final act of resistance available to the reader attemping to renegotiate the dominant discourse(s) of this story is to resist the ostensible 'happy ending' of this 'charming

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[102] Leach 1974, 125. Janan 1988, 125 also emphasises the negative implications for Pygmalion as his extraordinary work of art becomes an 'ordinary' woman: 'once the statue *is* a "true maiden", it is no longer artistically marvellous: the gap between appearance and reality which made its mimesis an artistic *tour de force* disappears'.

[103] Cf. Downing 1993, 58 on the transformation of men and women advocated in the *Ars*: 'Men mechanize (and replace) their inner lives; women mechanize (and replace) their superficial, surface appearance. Men remain outwardly the same, but are radically changed within; women remain internally the same, but are completely changed "on the face of it".' In this context, Downing's view of the *praeceptor* of the *Ars* as an 'anti-Pygmalion' appears inappropriate.

story of wish-fulfilment' and of 'piety rewarded'.[104] The resisting reader may draw attention to the tensions and ambiguities that problematise the conclusion to this 'fable of a miracle, of art, of love, and of a better human being',[105] highlighting the motifs of artistic failure and of sexual impropriety that may be seen to feature in this story no less than in the other tales narrated in the song of Orpheus.

The story of Pygmalion does not conclude with the metamorphosis of his statue, just as the metamorphosis of Pygmalion's *puella* is not completed by her vivification. A further transformation has yet to take place as the statue-turned-woman legitimates her union with Pygmalion by becoming the mother of his child. This metamorphosis, in which she provides final proof - if any were needed - of her vivification and her new status as a woman of flesh and blood, is influenced, like her previous transformation, by the agency of Venus who blesses Pygmalion's union with his *puella* with a child, Paphos. Such a blessing, however, is compromised by their failure to produce a son, Pygmalion's *puella* bearing a daughter and not the male child required to perpetuate the lineage of the *Paphius heros*.[106] Of more immediate significance in the context of the narrative, the birth of this daughter serves not only to undermine Pygmalion's future status and lineage, but also his present status and identity. For the birth of Paphos signals more than the transformation of Pygmalion from artist to father, it also signals the conclusion of his active role and agency in this text. According to the conventions more usually associated with women and (pro)creation - their stories, and interest in them, ending with childbirth[107] - Pygmalion's identity is eclipsed by that of his child. The text no longer refers to him by his name as he becomes identified by reference to the name of his daughter; Pygmalion becomes *Paphius heros*.

That Pygmalion and his *puella* should be responsible for the lineage of Cinyras and his daughter Myrrha, whose story follows that of Pygmalion in Orpheus' song of *inconcessisque puellas / ignibus attonitas meruisse libidine poenam* (*Met*.10.153f), further suggests that Pygmalion's mode of reproduction is not

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[104] Cf. Kenney 1986, 434 and Sharrock 1991b, 170. Perhaps, in this re-reading of the story, Pygmalion is rewarded with precisely the woman he deserves.
[105] Fränkel 1945, 93

[106] The preference in antiquity for male children is explored by Lange (1983) 11. In the *Metamorphoses* the story of another Cretan daughter like Pygmalion's *puella* - Iphis - describes an extreme example of a father's preference for a male child (*Met*.9.666-797), and it is significant, perhaps, that - like Iphis - the girl Paphos is given a name appropriate for a boy or a girl '*quod commune foret*'. Cf. *Met*. 9.710. On naming cf. also Janan 1988, 126-26.
[107] Thus, amongst others in the *Metamorphoses*: Io (*Met* 1.568-746); Callisto (*Met* 2.401-530); Semele (*Met* 3.253-315); Myrrha (*Met* 10. 298-502)

entirely positive. Pygmalion's act of creation might be re-viewed by the resisting reader as the (re)production of a daughter for whom he then conceives an erotic and incestuous desire.[108] Such a reading position is not particularly new, however. The sixteenth century writer Montaigne adopts a similar view of the Pygmalion story:[109]

> And as for those raging vicious passions which have sometimes inflamed fathers with love for their daughters ... witness the tale of Pygmalion who, having carved the statue of a uniquely beautiful woman, was so hopelessly ravished by an insane love for his own work that, for the sake of his frenzy, the gods had to bring her to life.

This configuration of the relationship between Pygmalion and his *puella* may also be seen to foreshadow the incestuous relationship between Cinyras and his daughter Myrrha. For Myrrha is 'the daughter who loves her father and thus never gains an identity separate from her creator. The fact that Cinyras and Myrrha are descendants of Pygmalion and his self-created bride is one indication of dark overtones in this seemingly optimistic central tale'.[110]

As the story of Pygmalion and his *puella* may be seen to foreshadow the story of Cinyras and Myrrha and to be implicated in the 'dark overtones' of this incestuous tale, so a similar shadow is cast upon the Pygmalion story itself by another tale of a 'man-made' woman brought to life: the story of Pandora. There are a number of compelling parallels between the two stories which suggests that, like Pandora, Pygmalion's *puella* may not be the perfect woman that Pygmalion and received readings of the tale commonly suppose.[111] In both the *Works and Days* (54-105)

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[108] Several readings highlight the language of procreation that is used to describe Pygmalion's 'relationship' with his *puella*: *feliciter, nasci, concepit, plenissima, plenus.* Cf. Leach 1974; Sharrock 1991b, 179. In this context, the reference to *alma Venus* in the narrative framing the story of the Propoetides and Pygmalion (*Met.*10.230) is particularly significant. The unusual epithet - used here to introduce Venus into the song of Orpheus - perhaps suggests that the relationship between Pygmalion and Venus, who both contribute to the (re)production of Pygmalion's *puella*, is modelled on that of a mother and father.

[109] Montaigne [1595], 1993, 451f. Cited in Tissol 1997,80. Montaigne's reading of this story also emphasises the agency of Venus in the transformation of the statue - a point frequently overlooked in more modern readings.

[110] Fränkel 1945, 96 also draws parallels between the stories of Pygmalion and Myrrha, referring to Pygmalion's marriage to 'his spiritual daughter' as a precedent for the union of Cinyras and Myrrha.

[111] Cf. Sharrock 1991b, 173-5. Sharrock draws a number of convincing parallels between Hephaestus' Pandora and Pygmalion's *puella*: she suggests that the gifts given by the gods to Pandora reflect those given by Pygmalion to his statue, and notes a direct allusion to Hesiod in the description of the statue as having 'the appearance of a real girl' (*Met.* 10.250 - *uirginis est uerae*

and *Theogony* (570-612) Hesiod describes how Zeus ordered Hephaestus to create a woman from clay to punish men for their degeneracy[112] - much as Pygmalion creates his own woman in response to what he sees as the degeneracy of women, typified by the behaviour of the Propoetides. Both acts of creation, moreover, share a common context of misogyny in which women are configured as externally attractive and modest in appearance, but internally corrupt and essentially deceitful.[113] Dominant readings of the Pygmalion story tend to assume that Pygmalion's Woman will be unlike Pandora and that she will be free of 'the vices which nature had given so generously to the female mind' (*Met.* 10.244f - *uitiis, quae plurima menti / femineae natura dedit*). Resistant readings assume that the alternative might also be possible.

The aspect of anthropogony suggested by the parallels of the story of Pygmalion's creation of Woman with Hesiod, is further emphasised by reflections within the story of other acts of creation narrated in the *Metamorphoses.* As Pygmalion's *puella* opens her eyes to see her lover and the sky, representing her world (*Met.* 10.293f - *sensit et erubuit timidumque ad lumina lumen / attollens pariter cum caelo uidit amantem*), there is an echo of Prometheus' creation of mankind (*Met.* 1.85f - *caelumque uidere / iussit*). Like Jupiter, who observes a degeneracy in mankind and responds by creating a new race of people, Pygmalion might be viewed as a creator-figure reacting to a perceived degeneracy in womankind by creating a new kind of woman.

Similar parallels may also be drawn between Pygmalion's re-creation of woman and the re-creation of men and women by Deucalion (son of Prometheus) and Pyrrha[114] after the flood. In this account, re-creation is once again represented as a

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facies) *viz.* Pandora appearing 'like a modest virgin' (*Works and Days* 71 - *parthenoi aidoiei ikelon*).

[112] Pandora is created specifically to punish Iapetos' deception and theft of fire. Cf. Hesiod *Works and Days* 54-105 and *Theogeny* 570-612.

[113] The resistant reading of the Pygmalion story offered here, in which Pygmalion's *puella* is similarly (re)configured as externally attractive and modest in appearance, but internally corrupt and essentially deceitful, could also be accused of promoting a misogynist agenda. This is a problem implicated in much feminist literary criticism (particularly in relation to the 'essentialism' debate cf. Fuss 1989). On the potentially positive aspects of deception and mimesis cf. chapter 3.

[114] *saxa (quis hoc credat, nisi sit pro teste uetustas?)*
ponere duritiem coepere suumque rigorem
mollirique mora mollitaque ducere formam.
mox ubi creuerunt naturaque mitior illis
contigit, ut quaedam, sic non manifesta uideri
forma potest hominis, sed uti de marmore coepta
non exacta satis rudibusque simillima signis,
Met. 1.400-406

response to the punished degeneracy of (wo)mankind and those responsible for this new creation are represented as pious figures respectful of the gods. More explicitly, the process of metamorphosis in both stories is presented as a softening process as hard ivory and stone become flesh, and the transformation of the stones thrown by Deucalion and Pyrrha into men and women is described as being like the sculpture of marble statues (*Met.*1.405f *sed uti de marmore coepta / non exacta satis rudibusque simillima signis*).

The contexts in which these cosmological stories of creation are narrated, however, are very different to that in which the story of Pygmalion and his *puella* is located. The story of Pygmalion 'has no setting, no images of the natural or the civilised world to fill out its background. Pygmalion has created a private love object and realized a private love within a world wholly isolated from reality'.[115] It is this isolation factor which most significantly marks Pygmalion's difference from the other creator-figures with which he might be compared; the creations of Hephaestus, Prometheus, Deucalion and Pyrrha are not created for the private satisfaction of their creators, but are made to meet a greater, cosmological purpose. Pygmalion does not allow his creation out of his own private world and, in this respect, he may be seen to fail as a creator - and as an artist. According to Elsner:[116]

> Pygmalion is unique. He is the ideal beholder who sees no more nor less than the artist saw; he is the ideal artist whose creation will never be subject to the misinterpretation of viewers. Only because Pygmalion was sole creator and sole observer, could his statue remain forever a human woman ... He is the artist - the one and only artist to preserve his work in its pristine integrity of meaning, since he never lets go of it, never lets it into anyone else's sight.

Pygmalion's closed and private world, however, is compromised by the vivification of his statue. As his *puella* comes to life, Pygmalion's 'unique' status as the sole observer of his creation is challenged; his *puella* opens her eyes to reveal herself as a viewing subject and as another observer. At first she sees only Pygmalion and the sky - he is her world - but her power to see and to interpret what she sees presents a fundamental challenge to Pygmalion's 'authority'. Not

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[115] Leach 1974, 125

[116] Elsner 1991, 159. This re-reading of the Pygmalion story demonstrates the potential for (mis)interpretation once an artist/author/creator sends his work out into the world.

least of all, because it is this awakening look that presents the opportunity for a re-vision of the story of Pygmalion and his *puella* from her perspective: it is her awakening look that encourages the reader to look back, to see with fresh eyes, and to enter an old text from a new critical direction.

Girl watching

Much reading is indeed like girl-watching, a simple expense of spirit.
Geoffrey Hartman, *The Fate of Reading*[1]

Images of silent women observed by watchful men appear throughout the *Metamorphoses*. Pygmalion's silent statue is gazed upon by her creator; bovine Io, deprived of human speech, is watched over by Argus - the monster with a hundred eyes; and dumb Philomela, her tongue cut out to ensure her silence, is held captive by Tereus - his Greek name that of a 'Watcher'. In stories such as these, in which an ostensibly passive female subject is denied a voice and the opportunity to tell her story 'in her own words', woman is presented as object rather than subject. The dominant narrative viewpoint aligns reader, author and narrator with a male viewing subject, making viewers - and voyeurs - of all.

Is it possible that a woman reader might adopt a different perspective? Might she look differently at these narratives and these women? Judith Fetterley's model of the resisting reader is formulated as a response and as an alternative to the 'immasculated' reader, the woman reader who has been persuaded by male authored and male biased texts to assume a 'male point of view' and a 'male system of values' as her own.[2] Feminist critics and theorists of film have suggested that a similar model of the 'immasculated' viewer might be posited for the female viewers and spectators of similarly male 'authored' and male biased films: films which may also be seen to persuade female spectators to adopt a male perspective and a male value system as their own.[3]

In her ground-breaking article on 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema'[4] Laura Mulvey challenged the assumption that spectatorship was a gender free 'human' experience, experienced in the same way by both women and men. She claimed that the visual pleasure of spectatorship - in relation to mainstream male-orientated cinema - was a (heterosexual) male pleasure predicated upon the assumption of a (heterosexual) male spectator identifying with a (heterosexual)

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[1] Cf. Culler 1983, 44: 'When we posit a woman reader, the result is an analagous appeal to experience; not to the experience of girl-watching, but to the experience of being watched, seen as a 'girl', restricted, marginalized.'
[2] Cf. Fetterley 1978, xx
[3] On film theory and gendered spectatorship cf. in particular, Jardine 1985; Gammon and Marshment 1988; and the collection of essays on film and the sexual subject in Screen 1992.
[4] Mulvey 1975

male protagonist and objectifying by his gaze a female image. In this early analysis of psychoanalysis and film, Mulvey assumed without question or detailed analysis that the spectator of a male-dominated and male orientated film would be male:[5]

> The man controls the film phantasy and also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator, transferring it behind the screen to neutralize the extra-diagetic tendencies represented by woman as spectacle.

While women are included in this analysis as passive objects of spectacle, their experience(s) and their pleasure(s) as active subjects of spectatorship are not considered: women are presented here, as in the films that Mulvey describes, as viewed objects rather than viewing subjects.

Mulvey sees the spectator's gaze, the viewer's look, as fundamentally 'active' and therefore as necessarily 'male'. She claims that: 'In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female.' Mulvey sees 'woman as image' and 'man as bearer of the look' and her analysis offers no space for the renegotiation of these terms.[6] For Mulvey, 'the determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto the female figure' - as onto a blank screen - while 'woman are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*.'[7] Thus, men look and women are looked at.[8]

This model of spectatorship, Mulvey suggests, offers the male spectator access to two different but complementary modes of visual pleasure: the pleasure of voyeurism and narcissism. 'The first, scopophilic, arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight. The second, developed through narcissism and the construction of ego, comes from identification with the image seen.'[9] The narrative of the film, Mulvey argues, invites the spectator to experience pleasure by identifying with a male protagonist and by sharing his objectifying view of a female image, an oscillation of spectatorship that involves the male viewer at once distinguishing and distancing

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[5] Mulvey 1975, 28
[6] Mulvey 1975, 27
[7] ibid.
[8] On the 'historically phallic association' of vision and the gaze cf. Fox- Keller and Grontkowski 1983.
[9] Mulvey 1975, 26

himself from the female image represented on screen, while identifying and locating himself with the male image represented there. This analysis, however, offers no place for the female as anything other than object. As David Rodavick points out, 'the place of the masculine is discussed as both the subject and the object of the gaze: and the feminine is discussed only as an object which structures the masculine look.'[10]

Mulvey's analysis, it seems, is restricted by the imbalanced structural symmetry upon which she bases her ideas of visual pleasure and gendered spectatorship, ordered by the dichotomy between active/male/viewer and passive/female/viewed her perspective, her own point of view is compromised. Mulvey sees such gender(ed) distinctions as both determining and determined, as fixed and immutable. Her analysis denies any possibility that the differences between these strictly ordered divisions might be renegotiable, or that their fixed boundaries might be moved. Her analysis does not admit that gender positions and subject positions might be unstable, that spectatorship might involve a multiple series of oscillations between different and even opposing gender and subject positions, rather than alternating between the two which she describes.

John Ellis suggests that the processes of identification which Mulvey describes do not involve straightforward equations between spectator and subject:[11]

> The spectator does not therefore 'identify' with the hero or heroine: an identification that would, if put in its conventional sense, involve socially constructed males identifying with male heroes, and socially constructed females identifying with woman heroines. The situation is more complex than this, as identification involves both the recognition of self in the image on screen, a narcissistic identification, and the identification of self with the various positions that are involved in the fictional narration: those of hero and heroine, villain, bit-part player, active and passive character. Identity is therefore multiple and fractured, a sense of seeing the constituent parts of the spectator's own psyche paraded before him or her.

Mulvey revises her position in a subsequent analysis of the gendered spectator, in which she recognises some, if not all, of these issues relating to the multiplicity, fluidity and fragmentation of each spectator's identity, gender and subject

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[10] Rodavick 1982, 8
[11] Ellis 1982, 43

position(s).[12] She defends her earlier designation of the spectator as exclusively male, claiming that the focus of her previous analysis was not the 'actual' sex of any 'real live movie-goer' (whoever that may be or may have been), but was rather the 'masculinization' of the spectator or movie-goer which is effected by the representation of women as passive objects and the representation of men as active subjects on the screen.[13] Mulvey thus restates her position, designating the spectator no longer exclusively male, but as exclusively masculine.

Recognising in this second article not only her existence but also the potentially different experience and visual pleasure of the female spectator, Mulvey considers the different modes of visual pleasure that male dominated and male orientated narrative cinema might offer women. She suggests, in line with her previous analysis, that the woman spectator may only experience pleasure in viewing such male orientated films by adopting a male viewing position: if she views like a man. For Mulvey, the pleasure of spectatorship is closely bound with the pleasure of mastery which she maps onto a gendered matrix - once again - associating mastery and therefore pleasure with the active/male/viewer and denying mastery and its attendent pleasures to the passive/female/viewed. She suggests that if a woman spectator of a male-orientated film views that film 'as a woman', if she identifies with any female character represented in that film, her identification with an image of passivity will deny her access to mastery and hence to visual pleasure. It is only by identifying with the active male hero that the female spectator may experience a sense of mastery and thus experience the pleasure of spectatorship.

Mary Ann Doane endorses Mulvey's view:[14]

> A machine for the production of images and sounds, the cinema generates and guarantees pleasure by a corroboration of the spectator's identity. Because that identity is bound up with that of the voyeur and the fetishist, because it requires for its support the attributes of the 'non castrated', the

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[12] Mulvey 1981
[13] Mulvey 1981, 69
[14] Doane 1988, 216. Both Mulvey and Doane focus their discussions of spectatorship upon male dominated, male orientated films, for which their analyses are more or less useful. Their views are not necessarily expected to be useful in analyses of feminist cinema or even 'chick flicks', where the processes of gender identification, subjectivity and objectification operate in different ways. Similarly, Fetterley's model of the resisting reader is not necessarily expected to offer a useful reading strategy for feminist texts - although it might offer an interesting one.

> potential for illusory mastery of the signifier, it is not accessible to the female spectator, who, in buying her ticket, must deny her sex.

Pleasure for the female spectator, it seems, must involve a form of masculinisation: a form of transvestism or mimesis in which she temporarily adopts the position and identity of a male spectator in order to view like a man. The position may allow the woman spectator to experience visual pleasure, Mulvey claims, but it may not be a comfortable one: 'trans-sex identification is a *habit* that very easily becomes *second nature*. However, this nature does not sit easily and shifts restlessly in its borrowed transvestite clothes.'[15]

Mulvey's account of the 'masculinization' of the female spectator of male orientated film thus appears to reflect Fetterley's account of the 'immasculation' of the female reader of male orientated literature.[16] Both suggest that as the viewers and readers of such 'texts', women oscillate between two different gender positions, identifing 'as women' with a male perspective in order to view and to read 'like men.' Both suggest, moreover, that in relation to such texts women are assigned a position of powerlessness in which their 'trans-sex' identification with the male serves to reinforce their *other* identity as female, the 'borrowed transvestite clothes' drawing attention to rather than concealing the woman's body beneath. This emphasis upon the powerlessness that is seen to be assigned to the woman reader and the woman spectator in both of these analyses is dependent, in part, on the assumption by both Fetterley and Mulvey that texts - whether literary or cinematic - encode a dominant and dominating discourse, a single, unified and self-evident discourse which must be read or viewed as such if the reader or viewer is to experience the pleasures of mastery that it permits.[17] Neither allows for the possibility that texts may encode more than one discourse and their analyses are compromised by the potential variability and plurality of this mode of dominance and its attendant forms of mastery.[18]

Ideologically symmetrical at some levels and on some issues, the parallels between Mulvey and Fetterley are not always direct. In particular, their models of the woman spectator and reader are framed within ostensibly very different

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[15] Mulvey 1981, 72. Emphases in original.

[16] Fetterley 1978, xiii

[17] Cf. Mills 1994 on the problems of assuming the dominance of a single textual discourse in any text.

[18] For critiques of the weaknesses and gaps of Mulvey's analysis, cf. in particular Stacey 1988, Doane 1992, and Ellis 1992.

contexts: the 'texts' of narrative cinema and literature are related only by a displaced parallelism in which their many similarities may also be seen to reflect differences. Thus, in the broader ideological perspectives adopted by Mulvey and Fetterley, Mulvey's focus upon the *pleasures* of the woman spectator may be seen to contrast with Fetterley's focus upon the *politics* of the woman reader. Alternatively, Mulvey's focus may be seen to complement and to parallel Fetterley's focus upon a reading strategy which operates to achieve the *political satisfaction* of the woman reader. (Similarly) Mulvey's emphasis upon the the oscillation of the woman spectator between different masculine and feminine identifications and subject positions may be seen to contrast with Fetterley's emphasis upon the resistance of the woman reader to masculine identification and subjectivity. Alternatively, it may be seen to complement and to pre-empt Fetterley's model of resistance.

For, in drawing attention to the possible oscillation of viewing positions, the possibility of viewing not only *as* a man or a woman but also *like* a woman or a man, Mulvey's analysis may be seen to raise key questions relating to gendered spectatorship and subjectivity which are subsequently addressed in Fetterley's analysis of the resisting reader. Although a linear relationship of progression between the two need not be posited,[19] it might be suggested that Fetterley's model of the resisting female reader builds upon and develops Mulvey's model of the female transvestite spectator. Mulvey's account of the 'masculinization' of the female spectator highlights the notion that women and men may adopt different positions - and, crucially, differently gendered positions - in relation to texts. This is clear from Mulvey's revision of her first analysis, even though she maintains her central premise in 'Afterthoughts' that the only 'desirable' position, that which would allow the spectator access to pleasure, is gendered masculine. Jackie Stacey claims that Mulvey's revised analysis is important for two reasons:[20]

> it displaces the notions of the fixity of spectator positions produced by the text, and it focuses on the gaps and contradictions within patriarchal signification, thus opening up crucial questions of resistance and diversity. However, Mulvey maintains that fantasies of action 'can only find

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[19] A linear relationship of cause and effect between the work of Mulvey and Fetterley would be undesirable for a number of reasons, not least of all because of the chronological 'disorder' of their analyses: Mulvey's first article on gendered spectatorship was published in 1975, and revised to suggest the 'masculinization' of the active spectator in 1981, with Fetterley's work on the resisting reader being published in-between these dates, in 1978.

[20] Stacey 1988, 120. Quotations in the extract are taken from Mulvey's 1981 'Afterthoughts.'

> expression ... through the metaphor of masculinity.' In order to identify with active desire, the female spectator must assume an (uncomfortably) masculine position: ... the female spectator's phantasy of masculinization is always to some extent at cross purposes with itself, restless in its transvestite clothes.

The crucial questions of resistance, if not obviously also those of diversity, Fetterley addresses in her analysis of the resisting reader, claiming that the masculinization - or, in her terms, 'immasculation' - of the woman reader or viewer could be avoided and pleasure still experienced in relation to male biased texts. Mulvey argues that the only way for women to resist their masculinization as spectators of male orientated, male authored and male biased texts is to watch female orientated, female authored and directed ones instead.[21] However, Fetterley argues that resistance need not limit the woman reader to female orientated or female authored texts. She claims that the resisting reader can look again at the sort of male orientated, male biased, and male authored texts that Mulvey would reject, and reread them in such a way as to make them available to the 'consciousness' of the woman reader - and, perhaps, also to the woman spectator.[22]

Fetterley's model of the resisting reader offers a mode of re-vision that enables the woman reader to identify with ostensibly passive images of women represented in male orientated texts, but to effect this identification in such a way as to avoid locating herself in a similar position of ostensible passivity.[23] Fetterley's model of reading may thus be seen to function as a modification of Mulvey's model of viewing, although there are further modifications that might be made to Fetterley's model in this respect. Her analysis addresses the questions raised by Mulvey in her relation to resistance, but not to diversity. Might there be room in Fetterley's model of the resisting reader for greater diversity and plurality? Might there be room for negotiation regarding a more fluid notion of gendered reading and viewing positions?[24]

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[21] Mulvey recommends a 'feminist cinema' as the alternative to these texts. However, Doane 1992, 77, suggests that this mode of resistance to male biased (cinematic) texts is inadequate: 'What is to prevent [the woman spectator] from reversing the relation and appropriating the gaze for her own pleasure? Precisely the fact that the reversal itself remains locked within the same logic. The male striptease, the gigolo - both inevitably signify the mechanism of reversal itself, constituting themselves as aberrations whose acknowledgment simply reinforces the dominant system of aligning sexual difference with a subject/object dichotomy.'

[22] Cf. Fetterley 1978, xi

[23] As demonstrated in the reading of Ovid's *Pygmalion* story in chapter one.

[24] Cf. Sutherland 1997, 28. Sutherland's article on visual pleasure and the poetry of Horace briefly

Ovid's *Pygmalion* story - of an active, male misogynist focalizer and protagonist, and a passive, objectified female image - offers a relatively clear-cut dynamic for the resisting reader to resist, but what of narratives in which male figures are objectified, in which female subjects act as focalizers, and in which reading and viewing positions are unstable and diverse? The story of Philomela, Procne and Tereus in book six of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* may be viewed as one such narrative in which issues of oscillating focalization, perspective and identification are foregrounded and problematised. In this narrative there are, arguably, three key protagonists, three different focalizers offering three different perspectives at various points in the episode. Identification with these different figures, as well as compliance and resistance to the different perspectives that they offer, engages the reader in a mode of oscillation which encompasses gender difference as the basis of a series of alternating subject positions.

Focalization in this narrative is effected primarily through spectatorship, and the reader is invited to identify with the various focalizers in the story by viewing from their perspective, seeing as they do.[25] This process is complicated, however, by the oscillating focus of the narrative itself which shifts between the three central characters, presenting each one variously as active viewing subject and as passive viewed object, thus offering the reader a variety of different points of identification and focalization - as well as a variety of different points of resistance.

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considers the use (and usefulness) of feminist film criticism for classicists.

[25] On focalization in the *Metamorphoses* cf. de Jong 1987 and Barchiesi 1989

Points of view

Be beautiful and keep your tongue.
Catherine Clement, 'Enslaved Enclave'

This oscillating focus and its attendant shifts of perspective are highlighted in the story of Marsyas (*Met.*6.382-400) which precedes the tale of Philomela, Procne and Tereus[26] the grotesque representation of Marsyas' flaying often being read in relation to the similarly grotesque representation of Philomela's rape and mutilation (*Met.*6.519-562).[27] The subject of an unusual form of punishment and transformation in the *Metamorphoses*, Marsyas is flayed alive for challenging Apollo in a musical competition and losing: another artist in the *Metamorphoses*, like Arachne and the Pierides, who is punished for the sake of his art.[28]

sic ubi nescio quis Lycia de gente uirorum
rettulit exitium, satyri reminiscitur alter,
quem Tritoniaca Latous harundine uictum
adfecit poena. 'quid me mihi detrahis?' inquit;
'a! piget, a! non est', clamabat 'tibia tanti!'
clamanti cutis est summos direpta per artus,
nec quicquam nisi uulnus erat; cruor undique manat,
detectique patent nerui, trepidaeque sine ulla
pelle micant uenae; salientia uiscera possis
et perlucentes numerare in pectore fibras.
illum ruricolae, siluarum numina, Fauni
et satyri fratres et tunc quoque carus Olympus
et nymphae flerunt, et quisquis montibus illis
lanigerosque greges armentaque bucera pauit.
fertilis inmaduit madefactaque terra caducas
concepit lacrimas ac uenis perbibit imis;
quas ubi fecit aquam, uacuas emisit in auras.

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[26] The brief reference to Pelops (*Met.*6.401-11) which divides the two episodes does not constitute a distinctly seperate narrative: it is rather a 'gap' which joins the two stories together.
[27] The 'grisly horror' of both episodes is often seen as a literary reflection of the horrors witnessed by Ovid and his contemporaries as 'real-life' spectators at the *arena*. Cf. Galinsky 1975, Richlin 1992b, and Segal 1994.
[28] Cf. Leach 1974. Marsyas is, of course, also made famous and immortalised because of his suffering for his 'art'. Cf. Richlin 1992b, 176. Richlin suggests that such victims, 'the artists horribly punished by legalistic gods for bold expression - Marsyas, and especially Arachne - read like allegories of Ovid's own experience.'

inde petens rapidum ripis decliuibus aequor
Marsya nomen habet, Phrygiae liquidissimus amnis.

When this unknown figure had related the fate of the
people of Lycia, another recalled a satyr,
whom the son of Latona had beaten on Tritona's
reed-pipe and punished. 'Why are you tearing me from me?' he asks
'Ah! I repent, Ah! A flute is not worth such a price!' he cries.
As he cries out the skin is stripped from the surface of his body,
there is nothing but wound; blood drips everywhere,
bare sinews are revealed, throbbing veins quiver
with no covering skin; you could count the palpitating entrails
and the parts clearly showing in his chest.
For him the country people, the spirits of the wood, the fauns,
his brother satyrs, Olympus - even then dear to him,
and all the nymphs wept, and whoever fed his
woolly sheep or horned cattle on those mountains.
The fertile earth was drenched and being drenched
caught those falling tears and drank them into her deepest veins;
and when she had made them into water, she sent them up into the empty air.
From this a river, heading rapidly for the sea along sloping banks
has the name Marsyas, the clearest river in Phrygia.

Met. 6.382-400

Conventional responses to this narrative, positing the reader as a spectator to Marsyas' flaying, emphasise its attention to gruesome detail and criticise Ovid's graphic treatment of this 'grisly' story. Kenney's description of the episode as 'The ultimate in gruesome wit'[29] is typical, and reflects a tendency amongst readers and critics of this brief tale to focus upon the surface detail of the narrative and not to look beneath its superficial significance - received readings of this story are only 'skin deep'. Readers of this story tend to respond primarily to its superficial ugliness. They are offended by the subject matter and its style of representation, the author's inappropriate use of wit in 'unfunny circumstances.'[30]

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[29] Kenney 1986, 411. Cf. Anderson 1972, 202 who describes the episode as 'grotesquely vivid'; Galinsky 1975, 134 who criticises the 'graphic detail' of the torture; Leach 1974, 118 & 127 who refers to the 'grotesque horror' of this 'brutal tale'; and Tissol 1997, 125-29 who labels Marsyas' representation as 'harrowing and repulsive'.

[30] Richlin 1992b, 158

What seems to offend is the author's rhetorical play at crucial moments of horror in the narrative: the victim's cry, '*quid me mihi detrahis?*' (*Met.*6.385); and the narrator's observation, '*nec quicquam nisi uulnus erat*' (*Met.* 6.388). The author is seen to show no sympathy for his 'victim.' Instead, he is seen to revel in the opportunity that is offered for linguistic play. Thus, Galinsky claims that:[31]

> Ovid revels in the graphic detail of Marsyas' torture and presents it almost as an anatomy lesson ... [Ovid's] interest in the physical detail takes precedence over any interest in the suffering Marsyas. Ovid involves the reader more and more: the description progresses from the past tense to the present tense, from the third person to the second person. But it is only the gory details that are brought closer to us, and not the agony of Marsyas.

The author is reviled as though this episode were 'pornographic', objectifying and exploiting another's body, his representation lacking beauty or feeling.[32] Yet the representation of Marsyas offered here is not 'pornographic' - and not simply because it lacks any obvious element of sexual objectification. It may be seen to share the 'ugliness' and 'obscenity' which Susan Griffin sees as the characteristics of pornography, but unlike pornography it may be seen to offer more than one viewpoint; it offers alternatives to a single, dominant, objectifying gaze. Received readings of the story, however, tend to accept and to promote only one such dominant gaze and only one such objectifying viewpoint.[33] Such readers objectify Marsyas as *nec quicquam nisi uulnus* (*Met.* 6.388), and resist any kind of identification or empathy with the tortured victim, ignoring or writing-off the

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[31] Galinsky 1975, 134

[32] Cf. Kappeler 1986, 1f: 'It is notorious that there exists no clear-cut definition of pornography; instead, different discussions identify different characteric elements as their basis for a discussion of the phenomenon.' Kappeler's own definition of pornography suggests that: 'Pornography is not a special case of sexuality; it is a form of representation.' Cf.also Griffin 1981, 82f. Griffin claims that the key difference between pornography and art is the absence of sympathy and feeling. 'The task of pornography' she claims, is 'to silence feeling.' Comparing two texts with similar themes and events, she suggests that one is art and the other pornography because of the presence of sympathy and emotion in one and because of their absence in the other. Both Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* and de Sade's *Justine* describe a father's sacrifice of a daughter, but Griffin argues that readers feel for Agamemnon and Iphigenia in a way that they cannot for de Sade's characters: 'Euripides' *Iphigenia* is a great tragedy, the other, *Justine*, is pornography. What separates the two is feeling.'

[33] Griffin 1981, 83 suggests that the dominance of this viewpoint in pornographic representations limits the potential of any reader or viewer to resist it: 'A woman who enters a neighbourhood where pornographic images of the female body are displayed, for instance, is immediately shamed. Once entering the arena of pornography, she herself becomes a pornographic image. It is *her* body that is displayed. And if she is interested in pornography, this interest becomes the subject of pornographic speculation. If she is shocked and turns away from the pornographic image in disgust, she becomes the pornographic 'victim'. She cannot escape pornography without humiliation.'

pastoral lament with which the episode concludes as an 'empty *topos*.'[34] This confusion and uncertainty as to how this story should be read, how this victim should be viewed, is not only an effect produced by readers and critics who fail to appreciate 'the emotional range of the *Metamorphoses*'[35], but is also an effect produced by the dynamics of the narrative: the narrative appears to emplot critical disorientation. There is no unified and active central subject or identifiable narrator of the story through whom focalization and spectatorship can be stabilised.

One unknown story-teller relates the tale of the people of Lycia and another unknown story-teller follows with the tale of an unidentified satyr (*Met.*6.382f). There is no immediately identifiable subject of the story to provide a stable point of focalization: the central subject is already an ambiguous figure - half man and half beast - further problematising the process of identification and empathy for the (human) readers of his story. Furthermore, the identity of this central subject is withheld from the reader until the very last line of the narrative (*Met.*6.400), when the name of the satyr is revealed: and when the name of Marsyas refers no longer to the tortured satyr but to a Phrygian river. Moreover, there is no direct connection or continuity between the river named Marsyas and the satyr of the same name: the satyr is not transformed into the river, the river is not even related to the (river of) blood which Marsyas loses; the river springs from the tears that are cried by all of those who lament Marsyas' cruel death. Yet Marsyas' position as a potential subject of and for identification and focalization in the narrative is already compromised by his introduction into the text as a passive figure already objectified by Apollo's punishment: he is (always) already the body being tortured and flayed, and no initial account of how he came - as an active subject - to offend Apollo and earn his punishment is offered.

Indeed, without this account of the cause of Apollo's offense and Marsyas' subsequent punishment, the narrative appears to lack a context. Without such a context to provide a frame and rationale for the episode, the flaying of Marsyas seems gratuitous and unnecessarily horrific. For, as Tissol suggests,[36] 'without such a context, the violence of his fate becomes the more harrowing and repulsive.' Without direction from the text, readers are left unsure of the story's significance and unsure of how they should respond to it. However, received

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[34] Galinsky 1975, 134
[35] Tissol 1997, 125
[36] Tissol 1997, 126

readings appear to resist what little the narrative does seem to offer in terms of shaping response and a meaningful reading perspective for the episode. The pastoral lament which follows the detailed depiction of Marsyas' flaying, and which takes up almost half of this narrative, would appear to offer an indication of an appropriate response to this story. Yet received readings remain unmoved, extending little sympathy for Apollo's victim.

It would seem that, once having been made spectators of Marsyas' torture - their voyeuristic gazes objectifying the satyr, reducing him to *uulnus* alone, as they are invited by the narrator to count his palpitating entrails, and to see the bare muscles, throbbing veins and other vital parts *perlucentes* (*Met.*6.391) in his chest - readers of this narrative are unable to change their view of him. It would seem that they are unable to adapt their gaze or position in order to identify with Marsyas as a subject *like* themselves, to see *as* he does. The inhabitants of the countryside, the dryads, fauns, satyrs, nymphs and shepherds are able to 'feel' for Marsyas and to lament his fate because they identify with him as one of their own, but the readers, whose view of Marsyas is fixed into a mode of objectification, cannot 'feel' for the torture victim: they see ugliness and obscenity and censure the episode and its author accordingly.

Such readers are particularly offended by the linguistic play with personal pronouns in Marsyas' painfully eleoquent plea 'quid me mihi detrahis?' (*Met.*6.385), in which the satyr's separation from his skin is represented linguistically.[37] However, as Tissol observes:[38] 'horror is if anything intensified by wit, and disruption does not invite withdrawal from emotional involvement in the story. Certainly it does not cause the repulsive description of Marsyas' flaying to lose any of its power.' It seems strange, then, that this linguistic play should provoke such censure. Perhaps its challenge to readers lies not in its disruption of their 'emotional involvement in the story' but lies rather in its temporary invitation to engage in a form of emotional involvement with the story: the speaking subject, inviting the reader to identify with him and to view, even momentarily, from his perspective - to see and to feel 'the horror' from his point of view.

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[37] The separation of self from self, described by Fränkel 1945, 81 as a 'cleavage of identity,' is identified by other victims in the *Metamorphoses*. Cf. Actaeon (*Met.*3.203); Ascalaphus (*Met.*5.546); Atalanta (*Met.*10.566); Scylla (*Met.*14.61-5).

[38] Tissol 1997, 129

Yet, by resisting this identification and this point of view, by resisting the emotional force and beauty of the episode's pastoral lament, and by resisting the oscillation of perspective and subject position that the narrative encodes, the reader experiences only the horror of Marsyas' situation. Without emotion or feeling, there can be no beauty or tragedy associated with this story, only ugliness and obscenity.[39] By resisting the tendency of received readings to adopt a single, unified perspective towards the narrative, however, and by adopting instead a more flexible mode of reading - and of 'spectatorship' - the reader may see more of Marsyas than his palpitating entrails.

For, as the story suggests, 'Marsyas' is what you make of him. In this narrative, Marsyas is, or rather becomes, what his audience makes of him - literally. The country people, dryads, fauns, satyrs, nymphs and shepherds who see or hear of his fate (*Met.*6.392-95) weep in response, and their tears are absorbed and transformed by the earth into the river 'Marsyas'.[40] Their reception and 'reading' of Marsyas' story effectively transforms the satyr into the river that bears his name: his new identity and form are based upon their reception and reading of his story. Thus, Marsyas *becomes* his own reception and reading.

As, in the story of the flaying of Marsyas, where the reader is invited to become a spectator, to watch as the satyr is stripped of his skin, to observe and to count his palpitating entrails, so the reader of the rape of Philomela is invited to become a voyeur.[41] For this narrative, Mulvey's vision of 'woman as image' and 'man as bearer of the look' and her claims that pleasure in looking is split between active/male and passive/female may be seen to offer an effective analysis of the erotically charged and emphatically male gaze that the reader is invited to adopt here.[42] According to the story, Tereus comes to Athens to negotiate with his

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[39] Cf. Griffin 1981, 82f.

[40] Cf. Hinds 1987b on the Callimachean significance of Marsyas' 'transformation' into a river, and on the metaphorical associations of rivers and water with creative and literary production.

[41] As Brenkman 1976, 296 suggests, it is impossible to recount a tale without already entering into interpretation of it: synposis is reading. Thus, in this reading of this narrative, the Thracian Tereus abducts and rapes his wife's sister, and, in what Curran (1978, 219) describes as 'probably the most repellant passage in all of Ovid,' he cuts out her tongue to ensure her silence. He keeps her imprisoned in an isolated forest hut, telling his wife that her sister is dead, and returns repeatedly to rape Philomela again. Unable to communicate orally or to escape, Philomela weaves the story of her rape into a cloth which she sends to her sister. Procne, disguised as a bacchant, rescues Philomela from the forest and plots her revenge against Tereus. She kills their son, Itys, and, with Philomela, cooks the child's dismembered body to feed to Tereus. The two women reveal what they have done, and as they flee from Tereus' wrath, all three turn into birds - each marked by the signs of their crime.

[42] Mulvey 1975, 27

father-in-law in response to his wife's request to see her sister. His honourable and dutiful intentions, however, are immediately revised at the sight of Philomela:

coeperat, aduentus causam, mandata referre
coniugis et celeres missae spondere recursus:
ecce uenit magno diues Philomela paratu,
diuitior forma; quales audire solemus
naidas et dryadas mediis incedere siluis,
si modo des illis cultus similesque paratus.
secus exarsit conspecta uirgine Tereus,
quam si quis canis ignem supponat aristis
aut frondem positasque cremet faenilibus herbas.
digna quidem facies; sed et hunc innata libido
exstimulat, pronumque genus regionibus illis
in Venerem est: flagrat uitio gentisque suoque.
impetus est illi comitum corrumpere curam
nutricisque fidem nec non ingentibus ipsam
sollicitare datis totumque inpendere regnum
aut rapere et saeuo raptam defendere bello;
et nihil est, quod non effreno captus amore
ausit, nec capiunt inclusas pectora flammas.

He had begun to tell the reason for his coming, the instructions
of his wife and to promise the swift return of the girl if she were sent:
See - Philomela comes, dressed in great splendour,
richer in beauty; like the naiads and dryads
we hear about walking in the depths of the woods
if only they were dressed in the same style as she.
Upon seeing the girl Tereus caught fire no differently
than if someone were to set fire to ripe corn
or to dry leaves or to burn hay stored in a barn.
And her looks were worth it; but an inborn lust also
roused him, and the people of his region are inclined
to Venus: he burnt with a vice that was his own and his people's
His impulse was to corrupt the care of the girl's companions,
her nurse's fidelity, and even to tempt the girl herself
with rich gifts - to spend his whole kingdom on her
or to rape her and to defend the rape with savage war;

there was nothing which he would not dare, captured by this ungovernable lust,
and his heart could not contain the flames within. 466

*Met.*6.449-466

The dramatic 'ecce' announces the entrance of Philomela and invites the reader not only to imagine the woman but to *see* her.[43] To see her moreover as Tereus sees her. The eroticization and objectification of Philomela as the focus of Tereus' gaze is made immediately evident. She appears 'dressed in great spendour', but Tereus may be seen immediately to 'undress' her with his gaze. He imagines her as a naiad or dryad[44] - that is, naked. The incongruity of this image of Philomela as a woodland nymph in relation to the picture of Philomela as richly apparalled princess as she is presented in this scene is highlighted in the text, drawing attention to Tereus' voyeuristic gaze: Philomela would have been like a naiad or dryad if only these nymphs wore the same splendid clothes as she (*Met.*6.454) - or, if she herself were naked.[45]

Looking at Philomela and imaging her thus, Tereus is inflamed with lust, immediately planning how he might gain possession of the girl, and *ab initio* considering the possibility of rape as a means of satisfying his desire, of getting what he wants. Indeed, it might be suggested that from the first, Tereus rehearses his rape of Philomela by means of his 'penetrating' gaze.[46] His gaze first

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[43] Cf. Anderson 1972, 174 n.165. This dramatic device is also used to announce the entrance of Corrina in a scene with a similar focus upon the erotics of the male gaze and with a similar suggestion of sexual violence in the *Amores*:
ecce, Corinna uenit tunica uelata recincta,
  candida diuidua colla tegente coma,
qualiter in thalamos formosa Sameramis isse
  dicitur et multis Lais amata uiris.
deripui tunicam; nec multam rara nocebat,
  pugnabat tunica sed tamen illa tegi;
quae, cum ita pugnaret tamquam quae uincere nollet,
  uicta est non aegre proditione sua.
*Am.*1.5.9-16

[44] There is some irony in this representation of Philomela as a princess/naiad/dryad; her 'natural' environment is the palace where she lives with her father, and not the forest where she will be imprisoned by Tereus. We can therefore expect no sympathy for her - as for Marsyas - from the other forest dwellers, naiads and dryads when her fate is revealed. Cf. *Met.*6.390-95 and *Met.*6.546f

[45] Cf. Glenn 1986, 78. It is clear from Glenn's reading of this episode where and with whom his sympathies lie. He sees Tereus as 'an over-stimulated jumping bean' and views Philomela - from Tereus' perspective - as 'a gorgeous girl in gorgeous attire, a refined naiad-dryad type.'

[46] Cf. Segal 1994, 260. Segal also suggests - borrowing Mulvey's terms - that the rape and mutilation of Philomela by Tereus are 'enacted symbolically through the agressive penetration of the male gaze, which here combines fetishistic scopophilia and sadism.' The point is, perhaps, a little overstated; it might be argued against Segal that fetishism and sadism are two operations of

undresses her (*Met.*6.452-454) and incites him to imagine his possession of her, even by rape; he then watches her as she kisses and embraces her father, his gaze rehearsing the 'incest' that the rape of his sister-in-law will enact, as he imagines himself in the place of Philomela's father:

> spectat eam Tereus praecontrectatque uidendo
> osculaque et collo circumdata bracchia cernens
> omnia pro stimulis facibusque ciboque furoris
> accipit, et qotiens amplectitur illa parentem,
> esse parens uellet: neque enim minus inpius esset.

Tereus watches her and looking he imagines her embrace,
observing her kisses and her arms around his neck
he takes everything as a spur, a torch, as food for his passion,
and whenever she embraces her father
he longs to be her father (and he would be no less impious!).

*Met.*6.478-482

Tereus' possession and mastery of Philomela is similarly anticipated and rehearsed in his imagination as he later tries to sleep: in his imagination, he again sees Philomela and, as before, he imagines - just as he wants to - those parts of her that he has not yet seen:

> at rex Odrysius, quamuis secessit, in illa
> aestuat et repetens faciem motusque manusque
> qualia uult fingit quae nondum uidit et ignes
> ipse suos nutrit cura remouente soporem.

But the Odrysian king, although he retired, burned for her,

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the gaze that are not readily reconciled or 'combined'. Segal cites Mulvey's analysis of sadism as dependent upon 'making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat.' Yet the fetishistic gaze may be described conversely as dependent upon 'the direct acknowledgement and participation of the object viewed ... The fetishistic gaze is captivated by what it sees, does not wish to inquire further, to see more, ...' (Ellis 1982, 47). Tereus wishes 'to see more' of Philomela, and he is prepared to achieve that desire by 'a battle of will and strength', but his gaze is not immediately or necessarily sadistic. Indeed, 'voyeurism' seems to offer the most relevant description of Tereus' gaze: ' Voyeuristic looking is marked by the extent to which there is a distance between spectator and spectacle, a gulf between the seer and the seen. This structure is one which allows the spectator a degree of power over what is seen: it hence tends constantly to involve sado-masochistic phantasies and themes.' (Neale 1992, 283).

recalling her face, her movements, her hands,
he imagined - just as he wanted to - that which he had not yet seen,
and he feeds his own fires, banishing sleep with his thoughts.

*Met.*6.490-493

Having gained a form of physical possession and mastery of Philomela, having her on board his ship, Tereus can scarcely restrain himself or his *gaudia*. His gaze of possession and domination is now firmly fixed upon the object of his desire, as a *predator* watches its prey. And in direct anticipation of the imminent rape the *predator* becomes a *raptor*:[47]

> exsultatque et uix animo sua gaudia differt
> barbarus et nusquam lumen detorquet ab illa,
> non aliter quam cum pedibus predator obuncis
> deposuit nido leporem Iouis ales in alto;
> nulla fuga est capto, spectat sua praemia raptor.

He rejoiced and, scarcely putting off his pleasure,
the barbarian never turns his eyes away from her,
no differently than when the predatory bird of Jove
has dropped a hare from its hooked claws into its high nest;
there is no escape for the captive as the raptor watches his prize.

*Met.*6.514-518

In each of these scenes, corresponding with Mulvey's model of spectatorship, 'the determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto the female figure'[48]: Tereus projects his fantasy upon Philomela. Philomela, for her part is 'simultaneously looked at and displayed': initially at least, she does not speak or act, her appearance is all that the narrative represents of her. Her appearance, moreover, is 'coded for strong visual and erotic impact' so that she can be said to connote 'to-be-looked-at-ness.'[49] Thus, Tereus looks and Philomela is looked at.[50]

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[47] The representation of the rape employs similar imagery to identify Tereus and Philomela in terms of a predator and its prey: Cf. *Met.*6.527-30
[48] Mulvey 1975, 27
[49] Mulvey 1975, 27
[50] Cf. Barton 1993, 90-95. Barton suggests that the gaze 'was often linked in Roman thought with metaphors of eating and cannibalism.' The imagery of Tereus and Philomela as predator and prey

Reading roles

Finally Women. Reflect on the whole history of women: do they not have to be first of all and above all actresses?
Nietzche, *The Gay Science*

The model of gendered spectatorship, like that described by Mulvey, is not the only useful model to be offered the literary critic or reader by feminist film theory. The emphasis upon role playing and mimesis as the focus of this theoretical mode may be regarded as a feature of cinematic texts that might also bear relevance for the reading of literary texts, emphasising the ways in which figures within texts no less than readers of texts are directed to play different roles. Indeed, it might be suggested that the roles played by the characters of a text and those played by its readers are interdependent: that the roles played by narrators and focalizers, silent and speaking subjects, the 'hero and heroine, villain, bit-part player, active and passive character' shape the reader's relation to the text and therefore the role that the reader plays in relation to it.[51]

For the reader's resistence and compliance, understanding and misunderstanding, empathy and hostility towards the text will all be influenced and shaped by her identification with and objectification of these different figures. Her role as a reader - whether she reads *like* a woman or *like* a man, for example[52] - will be influenced by the extent to which her view(s) of the text and its narrative correspond(s) with, contradict(s) or 'over-looks' the point(s) of view offered by the text's focalizers. Furthermore, her role as a reader may be influenced no less by the extent to which she objectifies and identifies with the various characters presented by its narrative.

In the representation of Philomela's rape, Philomela, Procne and Tereus may each be seen to play clearly defined roles, some of which are identifiable as character 'types'. Procne, in particular, is a character who plays many parts, 'dressing up' to suit each role. As Anderson notes, her response to the false report by Tereus that her sister is dead is to play the part of a mourner, the 'artificiality' - if not the apparent sincerity - of the role being emphasised by the reminder that, having just

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employed throughout this episode supports such a suggestion - which offers an additional dimension to the cannibalism motif at the end of the story.

[51] Cf. Ellis 1982, 43

[52] Or, indeed, whether she reads as or like any of the numerous types of reader identified in the Introduction.

cause to lament her sister's fate, she nevertheless mourns for the wrong reason. Her mourning, moreover, is figured as a 'costume change' as she puts on different clothes she assumes a different role:[53]

... uelamina Procne
deripit ex umeris auro fulgentia lato
induiturque atras uestes et inane sepulcrum
constituit falsisque piacula manibus infert
et luget non sic lugendae fata sororis.

Procne tore
from her shoulders the robe with gleaming gold band
put on black clothes and set up an empty tomb,
brought pious offerings to an unreal ghost
and mourned her sister's fate - not to be mourned so.

*Met.*6.566-70

When Procne subsequently discovers the truth of her sister's fate, she puts on a different costume in order to play the part of a maenad and, under cover of this role, to rescue Philomela from the forest hut in which she has been imprisoned by Tereus.

tempus erat, quo sacra solent trieterica Bacchi
Sithoniae celebrare nurus: (nox conscia sacris,
nocte sonat Rhodope tinnitibus aeris acuti)
nocte sua est egressa domo regina deique
ritibus instruitur furialiaque accipit arma;
uite caput tegitur, lateri ceruina sinistro
uellera dependent, umero leuis incubat hasta.
concita per siluas turba comitante suarum
terribilis Procne furiisque agitata doloris,
Bacche, tuas simulat: uenit ad stabula auia tandem
exululatque euhoeque sonat portasque refringit
germanamque rapit raptaeque insignia Bacchi
induit et uultus hederarum frondibus abdit

[53] Anderson 1972, 225 n.568-70, notes of *induitur* in this context that: 'since putting on clothes often means assuming a role, disguising one's basic nature, Ovid ... uses this verb metaphorically.'

attonitamque trahens intra sua moenia ducit. 600

It was the time when Sithonian brides would celebrate
the trieteric rites of Bacchus: (the night knew their rites,
by night Rhodope resounded with the clash of sharp cymbals)
by night the queen left her house, dressed herself 590
for the rituals of the god and took up the arms of frenzy;
her head was covered by a vine wreath, deer skins
hung from her left side, a light spear rested on her shoulder.
She rushed through the woods with a crowd of her companions,
terrible Procne, driven by the fury of her grief, 595
she imitated yours, Bacchus: at last she comes to the secluded hut,
she howls and cries out 'euhoe', she breaks down the doors,
seizes her sister, and having seized her dresses her up
in the signs of Bacchus, covering her face with ivy leaves
and dragging the astonished girl away, she leads her inside her own walls. 600

*Met.*6.587-600

Procne's performance in this narrative together with her part as a bacchant and her more central role as the killer and butcher of her own son, foregrounds issues and themes relating to role-playing and performance: Procne is an intertextual tragic heroine. Her part may be seen to draw upon a range of 'tragic' female roles, including that of Medea[54] and Clytemnestra,[55] and may be seen to be modelled, in particular, on that played by Agave in Euripides' *Bacchae*,[56] the mother whose

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[54] Procne's role as deceived wife and child murderer is similarly recognisable as a part made familiar by another tragic heroine, Medea, who also kills her children in order to punish the deception and infidelity of her husband, Jason. Indeed, significant parallels may be drawn between the representation of Philomela in the *Metamorphoses* and of Medea in Ovid's *Heroides*. In particular, both are driven by anger upon learning of their husband's infidelities to threaten their vengeance. Thus, Procne declares: '*magnum quodcumque paraui, / quid sit, adhuc dubito.*' (*Met.*6.618f), echoing Medea's similar threat to Jason at the end of her epistle in the *Heroides*: '*nescio quid certe mens mea maius agit.*' (*Her.*12.212). (The threat also echoes that of Philomela, who promises revenge against Tereus - *Met.*6.542-54.) Similarly, Procne's performance of the 'Medea' role is highlighted by her decision to punish Tereus by murdering his son Itys: the inspiration for this particular mode of revenge occuring to Procne - as to Medea - because of the apparent similarity in appearance between father and son. Thus, Procne condemns her son to his brutal death with the words '*a! quam es similis patri!*' (*Met.*6.621f), as Medea decides to kill her children in order to punish Jason, because of the apparent similarity in appearance between them: '*et nimium similes tibi sunt, et imagine tangor.*' (*Her.*12.189).

[55] Cf. *Met.*6.617f and Aeschylus, *Ag.*866-68 on Clytemnestra's threats to punish her unfaithful husband.

[56] Cf. also *Met.*3.708-733 for Ovid's representation of Agave.

bacchic frenzy drives her to kill and dismember Pentheus, her own son (*Bac.*1044-1215). Procne's bacchic frenzy, however, is not directly linked with her murder and dismemberment of her son Itys, although she is represented as a bacchant in the narrative as she goes into the forest to rescue her sister, her maenadism is presented as the performance of yet another role rather than as a genuine bacchic *furor*, like that attributed to Agave. Initially at least, Procne is not driven by the god, but by the fury of her grief, and only imitates (*Met.*6.596) the part of a frenzied maenad.[57] Her initial role-playing, however, leads her to assume the part of a frenzied bacchant 'for real' when she returns home with Philomela to plot her bloody revenge against Tereus and the brutal death and dismemberment of her own son, Itys: *quod incipiens finxerat esse, fuit.*[58]

In response to Tereus' crime - and in response to his change of role from loving and dutiful husband to cruel rapist - Procne may, thus, be seen to adopt a series of different roles, each marking a different stage in her own transition or transformation. From the role of similarly loving and dutiful wife and mother, through the role of mourning sister, to that of feigned bacchant, Procne plays role after role until, having murdered and cooked Itys, she adopts once again the role of dutiful wife in order to wreak her revenge upon Tereus, finally 'dropping her act' (*Met.*6.653) to reveal the awful truth to him:

> his adhibet coniunx ignarum Terea mensis
> et patrii moris sacrum mentita, quod uni
> fas sit adire uiro, comites famulosque remouit.
> ipse sedens solio Tereus sublimis auito
> uescitur inque suam sua uiscera congerit aluum
> tantaque nox animi est, 'Ityn huc accersite!' dixit.
> dissimulare nequit crudelia gaudia Procne

To this feast the wife summoned the unwitting Tereus,
and pretending that it was a ritual custom from her fatherland which only
a husband was allowed to attend, she removed all attendents and companions.
Tereus, sitting high on his ancestral throne
eats and fills his own belly with his own flesh and blood,
so great is the blindness of his mind, he calls 'Bring Itys here!'

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[57] Cf. the imagery of bacchantic *furor*, both real and feigned, of Dido and Amata in Virgil *Aen.*4.300-303, and 7.385-405. On Virgil's use of this imagery cf. Suzuki 1989.
[58] *Ars.*1.615f: *saepe tamen uere coepit simulatoramare / saepe, quod incipiens finxerat esse, fuit.*

Procne could not disguise her cruel joy ...

(*Met.*6.647-53)

Tereus,[59] here forced to play the part of unwitting victim, may in the rest of the narrative be seen to play the part of one who victimises - as a rapist. His role here is made familiar by other such characters in the *Metamorphoses* and, in particular, by Apollo, whose attempted rape of Daphne shares a number of characteristic similarities with the representation of Tereus' infatuation with Philomela before his successful rape attempt.[60] Both men are aroused at first sight by the beauty of the women they would make their lovers, and both imagine them dressed alternatively.[61] Both, according to convention, 'burn' with their uncontrollable desires. Thus, Apollo is said to burn with desire like an uncontrollable field fire ignited by a careless traveller: '*utque leues stipulae demptis adolentur aristis, / ut facibus saepes ardent, quas forte uiator / uel nimis admouit uel iam sub luce reliquit, / sic deus in flammas abiit, sic pectore toto / uritur et sterilem sperando nutrit amorem.*' (*Met.*1.492-96). Similarly, Tereus is said to burn like an uncontrollable field fire, but in this case, a fire that is deliberately ignited: '*non secus exarsit conspecta uirgine Tereus / quam si quis canis ignem supponat aristis / aut frondem positasque cremet faenilibus herbas.*' (*Met.*6.455-57).[62]

Playing the part of 'Daphne' to Tereus' 'Apollo', Philomela enacts another familiar role - as rape victim. Like Daphne, Philomela's close relationship with her father is emphasised, highlighting her status as a virgin, and like Daphne, Philomela is represented entreating her father - although for a very different cause - to allow her to have her own way.[63] Like Daphne, she too is figured as a 'natural' victim of her rapist's attentions: she is described as being like a frightened lamb, wounded but not killed by a wolf, and as like a dove, bloodied but released from its hunter's claws: '*illa tremuit uelut agna pauens, quae saucia*

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[59] Tereus' uncontrollable (sexual) appetite is familiar from Plato's representation of the tyrannical soul in book nine of the *Republic* 571-575b.

[60] Cf. Jacobsen 1984 for a comprehensive list of parallels between the two.

[61] Cf. *Met.*1.490 and *Met.*6.466, *Met.*1.497f and *Met.*6.452-54

[62] Thus, although many parallels may be drawn between these two characters and their situations in the *Metamorphoses*, the subtle distinction between their blazing passions - one started accidentally and the other deliberately - also indicates an asymmetrical relationship between them. Close reading of Jacobsen's reading of both characters and episodes (similarly) demonstrates that the attempt to map lines of direct symmetry between Apollo and Tereus reveals the distinctions no less than the parallels between the two. (Significantly, perhaps, Jacobsen focuses his attention upon the male figures central to these two episodes and does not offer comparable attention to the similarities (and differences) between Daphne and Philomela.

[63] Cf. *Met.*1.485-88 and *Met.*6.475-77

cani / ore excussa lupi nondum sibi tuta uidetur, / utque columba suo madefactis sanguine plumis / horret adhuc auidosque timet, quibus haeserat, ungues.' (*Met.*6.527-30). Similarly, Daphne, pursued by Apollo, is reminded by her would-be lover as she flees from him, that thus the lamb flees the wolf and the dove flees the eagle: '*sic agna lupum, sic cerua leonem, / sic aquilam penna fugiunt trepidante columbae, / hostes quaeque suos: amor est mihi causa sequendi.*' (*Met.*1.505-7).[64]

Philomela's role as 'rape victim' in the *Metamorphoses* may also be seen to draw upon the literary role(s) performed by Rome's archetypal victim of rape, Lucretia.[65] A form of fractured symmetry appears to link the two women and the parts that they play. Both are beautiful and dutiful - one a loving and dutiful daughter, the other a loving and dutiful wife; both are renowned for their wool-work, weaving and spinning - one because of her rape and subsequent mutilation, the other as a cause of her rape and subsequent suicide;[66] both are silenced by their rapists - one after the rape to prevent her revealing the crime, and the other before the rape to similarly prevent discovery; and both are violently avenged.[67] Indeed, this fractured symmetry between the roles played by Philomela and Lucretia is highlighted further in Ovid's *Fasti*, where the story of Lucretia's rape is concluded with a couplet alluding (indirectly) to the story of Philomela's rape - a seasonal or calendrical note to mark the approaching end of the month of February which names both Procne and Tereus: '*saepe tamen, Procne, nimium properasse quereris, / uirque tuo Tereus frigae laetus erit.*' (*Fas.*2.855f).[68]

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64 Again, the parallels between Daphne and Philomela reveal significant differences as well as similarities: Philomela, having already been raped, is like the lamb and the dove, wounded but released by their attackers; Daphne, fleeing Apollo to escape his threatened attentions, is like the lamb and the dove who (naturally) attempt to flee their predators.

65 There are also elements of Philomela's rape by Tereus which link her part with that of Rome's other historically and mythologically crucial rape victims, the Sabine women (cf. Dionysus of Halicarnassus *AR* 2.30-47, Livy 1.9-13.8, Ovid *Fast.*3.167-258, *Ars.*1.101-134, Plutarch *Rom.*14-19): in particular, the allusions that are made in accounts of both rapes to the legitimation of rape as a form of marriage (cf. Miles 1992 on the literary uses and abuses of the Sabine women as rape victims). Cf. *Met.*6.494 -510 in which Pandion's handing over of his daughter to the care and protection of Tereus is figured using the language and terminology of a Roman marriage ceremony. Cf. Pavlock 1991 and Anderson 1972, 217f, n.506-08: 'The number of ironic references to Tereus and Philomela as potential husband and wife suggests that Ovid knew the versions recounted by Apollodorus and Hyginus (namely, that Tereus actually received Philomela as wife to replace the supposedly dead Procne) but preferred his own more poignant account.' Joplin 1991, 44 suggests further that parallels may also be drawn between Pandion's handing over of Philomela to Tereus and Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia, which is also represented as a form of marriage.

66 It is the image of Lucretia working wool chastely with her maids that first incites Tarquin's desire for her. Cf. Livy 1.57-60 and Ovid *Fast.*2.723-856

67 Cf. Joshel 1992 on the literary uses and abuses of Lucretia as rape victim.

68 A previous reference to Philomela, Procne and Tereus in the same book reminds the reader of

Despite its parallels with other 'role models' and its dramatic emphasis upon role playing - or, perhaps, because of these features - the story of Philomela, Procne and Tereus is often criticised in received readings for its lack of dramatic coherence and for its 'theatricality'. Galinsky, in particular, claims that it is the narrator's focus in this narrative upon dramatic and violent 'scenes' which disrupts the codes and conventions of tragic decorum:[69]

> This is evident, for instance, in his detailed description of Philomela's mutilation by Tereus and in its counterpart, the death of Itys. Both scenes are characterised by extreme cruelty and a loving depiction even of the smallest sadistic detail. It is almost as if the poet were giving stage directions ... to make sure that every horrific effect is exploited to the full.
> ...
> The story is deprived of its tragic spirit, and external aspects predominate. Grotesque actions, hyperbolic gestures, and exaggerated cruelty take the place of the tragic idea, and the reader is treated to a spectacle of gestures rather than moved to pity or fear.

It is for these reasons, Galinsky suggests, that Ovid's 'dramatic' narratives should be read from a perspective which views their parallels as lying not with tragedy, but with pantomime. He warns against pressing the analogies between the *Metamorphoses* and pantomime too closely, and does not pursue the parallels between the two himself in any detail, but he argues that 'the emphasis on the single scenes in the *Metamorphoses*, the narrator's bravura performance, his sophistication, the constant shifts and changes, and the graphic, visual appeal of many scenes all have their counterpart in the pantomime.'[70]

Resisting Galinsky's *caveat* to avoid placing too great an emphasis upon the parallels between the *Metamorphoses* and the pantomime, the symmetry betwen these two narrative forms may be seen to offer a different perspective to the reader-as-spectator of Ovid's 'dramatic' text. Introduced to Rome, according to later tradition, in 22 BCE by the dancers Pylades and Bathyllus, pantomime

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the violent relationship between these three (*Fast.*2.629).
[69] Galinsky 1975, 129 ... 132
[70] Galinsky 1975, 68

re-appropriated and re-presented mythological, historical and tragic narratives in a new form.[71] According to Beacham:[72]

> Pantomime sought to present characterization, emotion, and narrative entirely through the movements and gestures of the body, or parts of the body of an individual performer who neither sang nor spoke ... The tragic pantomime was evidently contrived of sensational moments from Greek mythology generally, and from the great tragedies in particular, the scenes linked as lyrical solos and all performed by a single actor who was usually but not always male. This individual, silent performer was backed by musicians and either a single actor or a chorus which sang the part and provided the narrative continuity, during which he impersonated all the characters, male and female, sequentially, in a series of interlinked solo scenes consecutively arranged.

A series of different masks and costume changes would assist the solo performer in his representation of different roles,[73] and which Beacham[74] suggests would be changed as part of the performance. Narratives involving multiple characters, and thus multiple character changes, however, were avoided in favour of those with only two or three key protagonists, such as the Philomela, Procne and Tereus story,[75] the sole performer playing all the central roles.[76] Significantly, the story of Philomela's rape by Tereus was a popular subject of pantomimic representation: the *Philomela* identified by Juvenal as a particularly popular pantomime,[77] and the story of 'the daughters of Pandion, with what they suffered and did in Thrace' identified by the Greek author Lucian as one of the many subjects that the *pantomimus* should know thoroughly.[78]

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71 Cf. Beare 1964, Beacham 1991, Garton 1972. Beare 234, emphasises the literary status of this dramatic form, noting that both Lucan and Statius wrote libretti for the pantomime.
72 Beacham 1991, 141f
73 Cf Procne's various 'costume changes' decribed above.
74 Cf. Beacham 1991, 142
75 Cf Galinsky 1975, 68. Galinsky observes, for example, that 'the pantomimic qualities of an episode like that of Narcissus are striking.'
76 This feature of the pantomime - one performer miming all the roles - is attested by some (cf. Beare 1964, 234) as the etymological base of the term '*panto mimus*'. Others (cf. Garton 1972, 268 and Beacham 1991, 144) suggest that the term might also relate to the pantomimic performance as 'all-in-mime' and as a 'mime-of-all-the-whole-story'.
77 Juvenal *Sat.*7.92
78 Lucian *Salt* 40

Indeed, Lucian's account of the range of subject material which the *pantomimus* should know, parallels the subjects included in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with remarkable symmetry.[79] Thus, as Ovid offers an account of the history of the world, covering a range of mythological, historical and tragic narratives, from the aboriginal chaos to his own time: '*primaque ab origine mundi / ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen.*' (*Met.*1.3f), so too does the *pantomimus*. Lucian claims that: 'Beginning with chaos and the first origins of the cosmos, he must know everything down to the story of Cleopatra the Egyptian.' (*Salt* 37). Moreover, although Ovid denies ever having written specifically for the pantomime, in the *Tristia* he indicates that his work did become the subject of pantomimic representation during his exile: '*carmina quod pleno saltari nostra theatro, / uersibus et plaudi scribis, amice meis, nil equidem feci - tu scis hoc ipse - theatris, / Musa nec in plausus ambitiosa mea est.*' (*Tri.*5.7.25-28).

The parallels between the *Metamorphoses* and the pantomime, then, seem to display clear lines of symmetry. But what significance might this bear for the (woman) reader of the *Metamorphoses*, and in particular for the reader reading the rape of Philomela as or like a woman? The pantomime presents a form of narrative in which focalization is fragmented. Although ostensibly unified by the single pantomimic performer, the ever-changing roles of the *pantomimus* offer ever-changing and often competing perspectives upon the story being told. Such a performance of the story of Philomela, Procne and Tereus, for example, would present the tale from three very different viewpoints and positions, the focalization of the narrative shifting between the three central characters.

For the moment of its performance, moreover, each different perspective would (temporarily) dominate the narrative: Tereus' view of the rape of Philomela would provisionally represent *the* view of the rape of Philomela, at least, until the transformation of the *pantomimus* into the character of Philomela or Procne would, in turn, transform their view into *the* view of the narrative, eclipsing that of Tereus. Thus, the notion that a narrative might present a single, unified perspective or that it might encode a single, unified and dominant discourse is destabilised by the single pantomimic performer, who demonstrates that - potentially at least - such unified perspectives and such dominant discourses are always plural and only ever provisional. As Morell suggests: 'a one-dimensional literary text becomes multi-dimensional when it moves into the context of performance.'[80]

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[79] On this parallel, cf. Galinsky 1975, 68f and Richlin 1992b, 175f.

[80] Morrell 1996, 110. Morrell further suggests that a 'linear' represention becomes 'non-linear'

The implications of such plurality and provisionality for readers of the *Metamorphoses* are significant, particularly for the resisting reader who would resist the idea of unified perspectives and dominant discourses no less than she would resist their textual effects. The resisting reader of the representation of Philomela's rape, might then assume a role like that of the *pantomimus*, emphasising the fragmentation and oscillation of her perspective. One of the focal points of this narrative, and one of its most dramatic scenes - indeed, an ideal scene for re-presentation by a *pantomimus* - is that in which Tereus cuts out Philomela's tongue. Following her rape, Philomela delivers a long and rhetorically sophisticated speech, declaring her intentions to see that Tereus is punished for his crime against her (*Met.*6.533-48). Tereus, responding to her speech with anger and fear, cuts out her tongue:

talibus ira feri postquam commota tyranni
nec minor hac metus est, causa stimulatus utraque,
quo fuit accinctus, uagina liberat ensem
arreptamque coma fixis post terga lacertis
uincla pati cogit; iugulum Philomela parabat
spemque suae mortis uiso conceperat ense:
ille indignantem et nomen patris usque uocantem
luctantemque loqui conprensam forcipe linguam
abstulit ense fero. radix micat ultima linguae,
ipsa iacet terraeque tremens inmurmurat atrae,
utque salire solet mutilatae cauda colubrae,
palpitat et moriens dominae uestigia quaerit.

When the anger of the cruel king had been roused by such words
and his fear no less, roused on both counts,
he freed from its sheath the sword which he was wearing,
seized her by the hair, held her arms behind her back
and forced her to endure being bound; Philomela was offering her throat
and, seeing the sword, was filled with hope of death;
calling out the name of her father again and again,
struggling to speak, he caught her tongue with pincers
and cut it out with his cruel sword. The end of its root flickers,

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when such a performance includes elements of improvisation, deconstructive commentary and audience interaction.

the tongue itself lies trembling and murmuring on the dark earth,
just as the tail of a mutilated snake jumps,
it twitches and as it dies looks for its mistress' feet. 560

*Met.*6.549-560

In this scene, the 'dominant' focalization appears to be that of the narrator, the detached spectator of events who observes, without direct comment, the horror of Tereus' act. He reports each move performed by the central figures in vivid, almost choreographical, detail but reserves his 'editorial comment'[81] until the conclusion of the scene, where his observation relates not to the brutality or credibility of Tereus' act as they are represented here, but to subsequent reports that Tereus compounded his brutal treatment of Philomela by returning even after the mutilation to repeatedly rape her again: '*hoc quoque post facinus (uix ausim credere) fertur / saepe sua lacerum repetisse libindine corpus*' (*Met.*6.561f). It is this (reported) aspect of the myth that the narrator suggests may be incredible; he offers no such observation or objection in relation to the original rape or to the act of mutilation itself.

There is, then, no break in the narrative of this scene to draw attention to the role of the narrator or to interrupt the reader's view of events. Even the role of the narrator as director of the scene may be seen to be obscured by the vivid force of the narrative: *ars adeo latet arte sua.* As Anderson notes:[82] 'the scene is so very vivid and developed in such patent stages that we do not stop Ovid and ask: how did Tereus do all that with only two hands?' - or at least, we do not at the first reading. Indeed, Richlin suggests that a connection with the pantomime and its emphasis upon gesture as a medium of representation might offer one explanation for the 'curiosity of Ovid's style' in this scene:[83] 'with one hand, Tereus unsheathes his sword; with the other, he grabs Philomela by the hair; with the other, he bends her arms behind her back; with the other, he chains her wrists; with the other, he graps her tongue with a pair of forceps, and finally he uses the sword to cut out her tongue.' The coherence of this scene, however, is not compromised by the physical and technical implausabilty of Tereus' actions.

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81 Cf. Galinsky 1975, 20
82 Anderson 1972, 223. Nor - at the first reading - do we stop Ovid and ask: where do the forceps come from?
83 Richlin 1992b, 175

Received readings of the narrative posit the narrator and reader as sharing the same detached perspective towards this scene, distancing both from the violence that it represents.[84] Anderson's observations on 'what the author saw' (graphically) serve to illustrate this view:[85]

> First he peers into the girl's open mouth and notes the roots of the tongue flickering futiley up and down. But he hears no sound - and surely she screamed - nor observes even a spot of blood, although such added details could decisively control our impressions. Then his gaze drops to the ground where the tongue is lying. ... It can hardly be imagined that Ovid expected us to believe his details about the tongue, even if reinforced with the simile of the snake, which resembles Lucretius 3.657ff.; nor should we in our superiority think that he turned away from the shrieking, bleeding, wild Philomela to this tiny tongue to enhance his tragedy. Quite the reverse. He reached a moment of horror, and now he desires to mute it. The grotesque rhetorically relieves us, helps to place more distance at last between us and the actors.

This distance between 'us and the actors' is a gap that is temporarily bridged at the beginning of the scene by the details that is offered by the narrator to describe the respective feelings of Tereus and Philomela. The reader is offered a brief emotional analysis of both characters: Tereus, is seen to be motivated by the force of fear and anger (*Met.*6.549f), and Philomela is seen to be motivated by the hope of death as a means of saving her from further disgrace (*Met.*6.553f). This emotional analysis offers the reader a moment of empathy for the actors of this scene before the focus of the narrative shifts and a third 'actor' takes centre stage: Philomela's tongue.[86]

Indeed, just as received readings of the flaying of Marsyas resist the initial 'empathetic' perspective of the satyr that the narrative offers (*Met.*6.385f) to focus only upon the character's *uulnus* (*Met.*6.388-91), so received readings of this similarly gruesome scene focus not upon the suffering of Philomela but upon her *uulnus*, her severed tongue. As Marsyas becomes his wound, so Philomela becomes her tongue. Like Marsyas, she is reduced in these readings to the status of

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[84] Cf. Galinsky 1975, 20 and Tissol 1997, 127f on the detachment of reader and narrator from this scene of violence.
[85] Anderson 1972, 224
[86] Cf. Richlin 1992b, 163

an object: 'an almost impersonal *lacerum corpus*.'[87] This identification of Philomela *as* her tongue is emphasised in the narrative by the suppression and delay of the 'linguistic' object of Tereus' actions in this scene. Thus, '*ille*' (*Met*.6.555), related to a series of feminine modifiers - '*indignatem*' (*Met*.6.555), '*uocantem*' (*Met*.6.555), '*luctantemque loqui*' (*Met*.6.556), '*conprensam forcipe*' (*Met*.6.556) - suggests that the (grammatical) object here - indignant, calling out, struggling to speak, and held by pincers - is Philomela. The delayed feminine object '*linguam*' (*Met*.6.556) appears where Philomela is expected, taking her place literally and linguistically, to reveal that it is not Philomela who is the focus and object of attention here but her tongue.

Received readings emphasise the 'objectification' of Philomela in this identification with her tongue. They highlight the lack of empathy that is shown for Philomela in this scene and draw attention to the fact that, having offered her throat to Tereus' sword in the hope of death, Philomela is effectively 'written out' of this scene: her suffering represented by that of her tongue, which even 'speaks' - or attempts to speak - for her (*Met*.6.558). However, this objectification of Philomela, this identification of the woman with her tongue, and the focus which produces such a perspective may be resisted. Philomela may be viewed not as a (displaced) object to be observed by the narrator and reader but as a viewing subject herself, sharing - and perhaps even directing - the perspective of the resisting reader.

For the same narrative which seems to figure Philomela as her *lingua* by manipulating the reader's expectations of the linguistic object of Tereus' actions, may also be seen to represent Philomela's own view of the scene and her own expectations of Tereus. When Tereus binds Philomela and draws his sword, Philomela expects to be killed (*iugulum Philomela parabat / spemque suae mortis uiso conceperat ense* - *Met*.6.553f). With no direction from the narrative to suggest otherwise, the reader similarly expects her to be killed. The reader's surprise at having her expectations confused and then confounded - as Tereus' sword cuts not Philomela's *iugulum* but her *linguam* - is also Philomela's surprise. The reader is invited to read this narrative from Philomela's perspective - *uiso ... ense* (*Met*.6.554) operating as the 'cue' for this focalization. The reader is invited not merely to see her as a viewed object but to see *with* her as a viewing subject.

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[87] Galinsky 1975, 131

From this perspective - from a perspective that is shared with Philomela, Anderson's concern that as the narrator 'peers into the girl's open mouth and notes the roots of the tongue flickering futiley up and down' he hears nothing and sees no blood from the ('surely') 'shrieking, bleeding, wild Philomela' - is resolved.[88] For, from this perspective, it is not the narrator nor the reader who is seen to look into Philomela's mouth to *see* the end of the tongue's root flickering - it is rather Philomela who is seen to *feel* this sensation. It is moreover, not (only) the narrator or the reader whose gaze then drops to the ground where the severed tongue lies - it is (also) Philomela, whose reaction to not being that '*ipsa*' who lies trembling, murmuring, twitching and dying on the ground (*Met.*6.558-60), increases the horror of this scene. For Philomela is not 'written out' of this scene or entirely replaced by her tongue; no more than Tereus is 'written out' by the suppression of his name in this scene and the personification of his sword, which is given the same epithet as its master (*Met.*6.549, 557). The central focus of this scene may be upon sword and tongue, but the narrative suggests that as these represent Tereus and Philomela respectively, they do not replace them; they are seen to share an identity, but they are not identical. Thus, the '*ense fero*' is not the '*feri tyranni*' - the sword is only like Tereus; the trembling, murmuring tongue is not Philomela - it is only part of her.

This distinction between Philomela and her tongue, this interval or gap between the two, is significant. It allows the reader space in which to renegotiate her reading of this scene, to adopt a position and a perspective - or rather to adopt an oscillating position and perspective - from which she is able to view with Philomela as a viewing subject, *and* to view her as an object. It enables her to experience both horror and relief from horror as the distance between reader and actor is made to shift - as the reader, like the *pantomimus*, changes her role and shifts the focus of the narrative.

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88 Cf. Anderson 1972, 224

Rereading Rape

Rape is splintered, broken up, diffracted; it reveals in the proliferation of approaches and arguments a character less of itself than of those who discuss it and embrace it as theirs.
Norman Bryson, in *Rape: An Historical and Social Enquiry*

Amy Richlin views the symmetry between the *Metamorphoses* and pantomime from a different perspective. Locating her reading of Ovid's rape narratives within a pornographic context, she suggests that 'pantomime sets Ovid's rapes in 3-D.'[89] Focusing upon the popularity of stories of rape - including Tereus' rape of Philomela - both as a subject for pantomimic representation and as a subject of representation in the *Metamorphoses*, Richlin plots an explicit connection between the *Metamorphoses* and pantomime in accordance with a psychoanalytical model of cross-sex fantasy, 'in which the subject is said to oscillate among the terms of the fantasy.'[90] Within this model, the subject is considered to engage in a shifting mode of identification and objectification, oscillating between the perspectives and positions of the subject and object of the fantasy: an oscillation which Richlin sees paralleled in the shifting roles of the *pantomimus*.

From this perspective, the 'fantasy' of rape would involve the oscillation of the subject between rapist and victim, an oscillation between two differently gendered roles. Richlin suggests, however, that this oscillation does not offer access to radically different perspectives. She claims that such oscillation does not allow for an active female subjectivity, and may be seen to operate within a gender hierarchy which locates the female as a position of passivity and vulnerability. Thus, she argues that: 'the female is still the site of violence, no matter what the location of the subject.'[91] Within this 'cross-sex fantasy' model, it seems, male subjectivity and the male perspective dominate.[92] When the (male) subject of the fantasy identifies with the (female) object of that fantasy, he does so as or like a man; his identification with the object is never identical to hers. When Ovid focalizes his narrative through the perspective of a rape victim, his representation of the experience of this female position is formed from his own position and perspective - experienced as or like a man. Similarly, when the *pantomimus* plays

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89 Richlin 1992b, 174
90 Richlin 1992b, 176. Cf. Mulvey 1975 and 1981
91 Richlin 1992b, 178
92 Cf. Mulvey 1975 and 1981. According to Mulvey, it is in this element of mastery and domination that the pleasure of the fantasy lies.

the part of the rape victim, he plays this female part as or like a man, his feminine costume and gestures concealing rather than transforming his gender identity - just as the 'borrowed transvestite clothes' of Mulvey's cross-sex spectator (poorly) conceal rather than transform the woman spectator who wears them.

So, drawing further parallels between the *pantomimus* and the author of the *Metamorphoses*, Richlin questions Ovid's identification and empathy with the female characters in his representations of rape:[93]

> Roman poets generally published their works by giving readings, usually to circles of friends; and we recall the male Roman's experience of being the object of the male gaze, as an adolescent. So can it be said that Ovid empathizes with his rape victims? Certainly - as a great *pantomimus* might; but not with any but a delicious pity for them, a very temporary taking on of their experience, their bodies.

Richlin locates the symmetrical correspondence between the *Metamorphoses* and the pantomime within the context of pornography: a context in which empathy and feeling are excluded, in which objectification of the female precludes emotional engagement.[94] Her reading of both narrative forms suggests not only that their representations of rape exclude a female subjectivity, but that these representations may be seen as metapornography.[95] She argues that the 'cross-sex fantasy' offered in the rape narratives of both the *Metamorphoses* and the pantomime - the 'pleasure' of crossing gender boundaries to identify with both victim and rapist - is a male fantasy.

According to the model of the pornographic upon which Richlin bases her reading of these narratives, any mode of dominance - 'even dominance by women'[96] - is a mode of masculinity. Like Mulvey, Richlin appears to maintain that fantasies of action, of active subjectivity and of dominance, can only be expressed in terms of a 'metaphor of masculinity'[97] and that in order to identify with an active subject position, women must adopt a position of masculinity. Since the rape scenes

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[93] Richlin 1992b, 176
[94] Cf. Griffin 1981, 82f.
[95] Richlin 1992b, 176. Richlin also applies this label to herself as a reader of and writer upon 'pornography'. Cf. Richlin 1992b,159: 'The text I am writing is metapornography and partakes of the same subject-object relationship, the same 'gaze', that structures its object.'
[96] Richlin 1992b, 177
[97] Cf. Stacey 1988, 120; Mulvey 1981

represented in the *Metamorphoses* and in the pantomime operate upon the condition of some such mode of dominance - a mode of dominance or mastery which they also enact - Richlin assumes that it is only by framing them within a masculine perspective that they maintain their coherence. Within this framing perspective, she claims that even though the *Metamorphoses* and the pantomime may appear to identify and to empathise with the victims of rape that are represented in their narratives, and although they may appear to enable their readers and spectator's to do likewise, the gender hierarchy in which this cross sex/cross gender identification takes place - and in which it must necessarily take place - reinforces sex and gender difference. A difference, moreover, that is figured in terms of dominance and submission, of power and powerlessness.

Like Mulvey's model of the woman spectator and Fetterley's model of the woman reader, the 'cross-sex fantasy model' offered by Richlin as an analysis of reading representations of rape suggests that cross-sex identification does not disorder the gender hierarchy but re-confirms its existing order, assigning the feminine as a position of powerlessness and the masculine as a position of mastery. As Richlin notes:[98] 'fantasy of movement within the system is not escape from the system.' Indeed, for Richlin, movement within the system is restricted to movement between two polar positions ordered upon an axis which opposes the active/male/subject to the passive/female/object. Like Mulvey,[99] Richlin sees these oppositions as fixed and immutable, determining and determined, and her reluctance to acknowledge that such positions might be negotiable and interchangeable - or that they might be made so by fragmentation and oscillation - places restrictions upon the scope of her analysis and upon the usefulness of her model.

Unlike the models described by Mulvey and Fetterley, moreover, Richlin's model does not focus upon the readers or spectators of narratives, but may be seen to focus instead the producers of rape narratives. The focus of her cross-sex fantasy model for 'reading rape' is directed towards the figure of the *pantomimus* and upon Ovid as author of the *Metamorphoses*, whose 'representations' of rape are seen as 'readings' of rape. Such representations may, indeed, be viewed as readings, yet Richlin's re-presentation and rereading of them seems to be pursued

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[98] Richlin 1992b, 177
[99] Cf Mulvey 1975 and 1981

at the expense of the female readers for whom she ostensibly writes - and reads.[100]

In Richlin's emphasis upon representations of rape rather than upon readings of rape she draws attention to the publication of Roman literary works as 'readings'.[101] When she refers to the 'audience' of these representations it is, moreover, to a notional originary audience that she appeals: those who 'originally' viewed the performance of the *pantomimus* and those who first heard the poet's readings. When she refers to 'the female members of Ovid's audience', the female readers of his representations of rape, she refers to 'Roman women'; she argues that because 'we have no evidence of any raised consciousness among Roman women' neither the pantomime nor Ovid's poetry may be considered to include a 'female subjectivity'.[102] Richlin's 'cross-sex fantasy model', it seems, excludes the perspective of the very women readers that it condemns the *pantomimus* and Ovid for excluding. It is no surprise then that the limitations and restrictions of this model should prove to offer an inadequate framing perspective from which to 'read rape' as or like a woman. As Richlin herself concedes:[103] 'we begin to look for ways out; the model begins to feel like a trap.'

How then should a woman read representations of rape? How might the reader who reads like or as a woman read pornographic or metapornographic texts, texts in which women are objectified?[104] If, as it is suggested, 'resistance is possible',[105] how might the resisting reader read such narratives? A number of received readings, particularly those informed by feminist literary theory, suggest that Procne might offer a different way of looking at - of reading - Philomela's rape. They claim that her character - by reading Philomela's web, by rescuing her sister, and by punishing the brutal Tereus - offers an example of an active female subjectivity, a different perspective towards this text and towards Philomela's rape.[106]

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[100] A possible concession to a literary critical hierarchy which orders models of reading no less than the gender hierarchy that Richlin would seek to dismantle.
[101] Cf. Richlin 1992b, 176
[102] Richlin 1992b, 177
[103] ibid.
[104] Cf. Richlin 1992b, 158. Richlin views 'the pornographic' as 'that which converts living beings into objects.'
[105] Cf. Richlin 1992b, 173
[106] Cf. Joplin 1991, Segal 1994, and against this view cf. Richlin 1992b

Charles Segal sees Procne as the 'implied' (female) reader of this narrative, claiming that 'the text envisages, if only momentarily, a female recipient, a female 'reader' of its story, namely Procne.'[107] More than the implied reader of this story, indeed, Segal views Procne as the text's 'model' reader: 'Procne, the tale's first 'reader', unrolls (*euoluit*) the woven narrative as a contemporary of Ovid would unroll the poem; she is the model for the later reader's immediate reaction.'[108] Patricia Joplin's feminist rereading of the story similarly highlights Procne's position as a reader in and of this text: her emphasis upon 'the tension of feminist poetics'[109] as one of the myth's central motifs, moreover, implies Procne's potential configuration as a 'feminist' reader. These readings assume, because Procne is a female character, that her perspective will be a woman's perspective, and that she will read Philomela's rape and Philomela's 'text' from such a perspective - 'as a woman'.

Both Segal and Joplin, moreover, attribute particular significance to Procne's reading of a 'feminine' text: that is, Philomela's woven *carmen*, a text not only produced by a female author but a text produced in an emphatically female medium. Segal suggests that a direct symmetry between Philomela and Procne as 'female teller' and as 'female audience' may be drawn, claiming of Philomela, that 'her mode of narration exactly corresponds to Procne's mode of reception, that is, silence.'[110] When Procne receives Philomela's 'text', the narrative marks the significance of her silent response with an authorial interjection:

> euoluit uestes saeui matrona tyranni
> fortunaeque suae carmen miserabile legit
> et (mirum potuisse!) silet: dolor ora repressit,
> uerbaque quaerenti satis indignantia linguae
> defuerunt, nec flere uacat, sed fasque nefasque
> confusura ruit poenaque in imagine tota est.

The wife of the savage tyrant unrolls the cloth
and reads of her pitiable fortune
and (a miracle that she could) she was silent: grief held her lips,
and searching for words to suit her outrage,

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[107] Segal 1994, 263
[108] Segal 1994, 267
[109] Joplin 1991, 37
[110] Segal 1994, 264

they elude her tongue; nor could she weep, but she rushed on 585
to confuse right and wrong, her whole mind set on punishment.

*Met.*6.581-586

Procne's silent reception and reading of her sister's silent text is represented as something deserving of comment, her silence prompting the narrator to 'speak out' (*Met.*6.583), to indicate that her response to Philomela's *carmen* is not an obvious - nor, perhaps, an appropriate - response. The reader of Ovid's *carmen* is unable to assess fully the legitimacy of Procne's reading and reception of Philomela's *carmen*, however, because the '*notae*' of Philomela's textile are not figured in Ovid's text and no representation is offered of the '*indicium sceleris*' (*Met.*6.578) in the narrative. Indeed, it is not even made clear whether Philomela represents the story of her rape using words or images. Thus, Ovid silences Philomela by excluding the representation of her *carmen* and replacing it with his own, as effectively as Tereus silenced her by excising her tongue and telling a false story to Procne about her sister's death. The narrator offers *his* version of events, *his* representation of the rape in place of Philomela's, just as Tereus offered Procne his fictional representation of the abduction and rape of her sister ('*dat gemitus fictos commentaque funera narrat, / et lacrimae fecere fidem.*' *Met.*6.565f).

Procne's reading of Philomela's re-presentation of the rape, then, is not obviously represented here as *the* reading of the rape or as a model of a woman's reading of rape. Procne's silent reception of Philomela's version of events may be seen to correspond with her sister's silent production of her text no more than it may be seen to correspond with her wordless reception of Tereus' story (*Met.*6.566-570). Procne's reading of Philomela's representation of the rape, moreover, appears in the narrative to involve no sense of identification or empathy with the victim of the rape - even though that victim is Procne's own sister. Rather, Procne appears to read Philomela's text from her perspective, focusing upon her own misfortune rather than upon that of her sister[111] ('*fortunaeque suae carmen miserabile legit*' - *Met.*6.582).

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[111] Although, perhaps in reading from her own perspective Procne prefigures the overt 'interestedness' of feminist readers.

Procne's actions following her 'reception' of Philomela's text further compromise any notion that she might offer an uncomplicated image of a woman reader or that she might present a woman's perspective of and in this narrative. For, although she may be seen to read Philomela's text 'as' a woman, she appears to respond to it 'like' a man. If women move from one position to another to adopt an active subjectivity in place of passive objectification, they do not disorder the system of gender hierarchy: they adopt a 'masculine' position - they act like men. In exacting her revenge upon Tereus, in taking up an active subject position, Procne may be seen to act like Tereus. The murder and mutilation of Itys may be seen to parallel Tereus' rape and mutilation of Philomela (*Met.*6.641-646).

Similar imagery of predator and prey is employed to describe Procne as she drags her child through the house to his death[112], the image of the tigress dragging its prey through the dark woods (*'nec mora, traxit Ityn, ueluti Gangetica ceruae / lactentem fetum per siluas tigris opacas, / utque domus altae partem tenuere remotam,' Met.*6.636-638) further reinforcing the parallels between Philomela and Itys. As Philomela called out for her father both before her rape (*Met.*6.525) and before her mutilation (*Met.*6.555), so Itys calls out for his mother (*'tendentemque manus et iam sua fata uidentem / et 'mater! mater!' clamentem et colla petentem' Met.*6.639f.) as she prepares to kill him. As Philomela's mutilated tongue retained some form of life, twitching as it dies (*Met.*6.558-560), so Itys' mutilated body retains some form of life as it is cut up and cooked by Procne and her sister (*'uiuaque adhuc animaeque aliquid retinentia membra / dilaniant.' Met.*6.644).

As the active subjects who violently assert their dominance over others, Tereus and Procne may be seen to present reflected images of the other. This symmetry between the two is perhaps most forcefully demonstrated in their respective abduction and rescue of Philomela. For, in each case, the seizure of the girl is figured as a form of 'rape'. Tereus drags Philomela, pale and trembling, to a remote forest hut where he rapes her: *'cum rex Pandione natum / in stabula alta trahit, siluis obscura uetustis, / atque ibi pallentem trepidamque ... / includit.'* (*Met.*6.520-523); Procne breaks down the doors to the hut in which her sister is imprisoned, seizes the astonished girl and drags her, pale and trambling, back to within her own walls: *'portasque refringit / germanamque rapit raptaeque frondibus abdit / attonitamque trahens intra sua moenia ducit. / ut sensit tetigisse*

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[112] Cf. *Met.*6.516-8 and *Met.*6.527-30 for equations of Philomela and Tereus with predator and prey.

domum Philomela nefandam, / horruit infelix totoque expalluit ore;' (*Met.*6.597-602).

The description of Procne's seizure of Philomela emphasises that the girl is twice *rapta*, that Procne's rescue does not (only) reverse Tereus' abduction, but re-enacts it. Segal suggests that Procne's act 'thus exactly undoes the act of Tereus, who had 'dragged' Philomela 'into' the forest',[113] but her act of reversal may also be seen as an act of repetition. Her reaction may be seen to correspond directly to Tereus' action, the inverse symmetry between the two highlighting similarity no less than difference. Procne's 'recuperation' of Philomela, then, releases neither woman from the system of hierarchy and mastery in which they are located. Philomela's *raptor* may change, the walls which surround her may change,[114] but she remains trapped within a system which appears to offer her no means of escape.

Another approach that the resisting reader might adopt in order to reread Philomela's rape might be to resist the pornographic model of rape: to resist the idea that 'rape is rape.' While the pornographic model asserts the seriousness of rape and its representation in literary texts and other media, it focuses predominantly upon the sexually motivated objectification of female subjects and locates the representation and reading of rape within a strictly ordered gender hierarchy - positioning the active/male/subject over and against the passive/female/object. The pornographic model as a framing perspective for the representation and reading of rape has offered a useful point of resistance against the view of rape and violence against women as an insignificant and non-problematic feature of artistic or literary representation. As Curran observed in 1978:[115] 'Traditional scholarship, systematically ignoring this fact and refusing to take rape seriously, glosses over unpleasant reality and prefers euphemism to the word rape.' However, in making a move away from euphemism and occlusion, some critics have further obscured the significance of rape and its representation by promoting the tautology that 'rape is rape'. Rape is not a unified, consistent thing-in-itself, and nor are readings or representations of rape. 'Rape' is, as Norman Bryson suggests, 'splintered, broken up, diffracted.' Perhaps rape is 'rape'.

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113 Segal 1994, 272
114 Cf. *Met.*6.573 and *Met.*6.600
115 Cf. Curran 1978

Rape in the story of Philomela, Procne and Tereus is fractured and fragmented in this way, offering different points of resistance - and compliance - for the resisting reader to negotiate. Ovid, it seems, was the first to introduce the detail of Tereus' rape of Philomela into the story, previous versions describing how Tereus satisfied his desire for Philomela by 'marrying' her after convincing Pandion that Procne was dead.[116] Yet, having introduced this innovation to the traditional mythological form of the story, Ovid does not locate the rape as the focus of his narrative.[117] Glossing over the act itself to relate only that it took place[118] - '*fassusque nefas et uirginem et unam / ui superat*' (*Met.*6.524f) - the narrative may be seen to offer a diffracted and displaced representation of the rape, effected through two separate episodes imaging the violence and the fantasy of rape.[119] Thus, the violence of Philomela's rape - identified in Roman law as *per uim stuprum*[120] - may be seen to be represented in the 'metaphorical rape' scene which follows the actual rape (*Met.*6.549-560). In this scene, a similar formulation to that used to describe Philomela at the point of her first violation (*Met.*6.522-526) is employed to describe Philomela's tongue at the point of its excision. Thus,

> atque ibi pallentem trepidamque et cuncta timentem
> et iam cum lacrimis, ubi sit germana, rogantem
> includit fassusque nefas et uirginem et unam
> ui superat frustra clamato saepe parente,
> saepe sorore sua, magnis omnia diuis.

and there, pale and trembling and fearing everything
and already asking tearfully where her sister was,
he shut her up, and declaring his crime, he overcame her by force
- a girl, alone, calling again and again for her father,
calling again and again for her sister, and above all for the great gods.

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116 ibid

117 Cf. Cahoon 1996, 61 on the similarly occluded and supressed representation of Proserpina's rape in *Met.*5.395f: 'What is missing from this 'Rape of Proserpina' is precisely the rape of Proserpina.'

118 On the 'decorum' of this omission of 'the lurid details' of the rape, cf. Anderson 1972, 220; Curran 1978, 216; and Richlin 1992b, 164

119 Cf. Curran 1978, 222: 'Along with actual rape, we sometimes find rape fantasy or metaphorical rape in which the man's 'conquest' is characterised by the language and imagery of rape. The *Tereus*, in addition to actual rape, also includes a large section which is an extended rape fantasy in the mind of the rapist (6.455ff).' Curran's identification of the story of Philomela, Procne and Tereus as 'the *Tereus*', ignoring the roles played by the women in this tale, is significant. Anderson (1972, 205-236) makes a similar move.

120 Cf. Gardener 1986, 118-125

may be seen to correspond with:

> ille indignantem et nomen patris usque uocantem
> luctantemque loqui conprensam forcipe linguam
> abstulit ense fero.

indignant, calling out the name of her father again and again
struggling to speak, held with pincers, he cut out
her tongue with his cruel sword.

Corresponding to the 'metaphorical rape' scene which graphically illustrates the violence of Philomela's rape by Tereus, the narrative offers a similarly diffracted and displaced representation of the actual rape by further illustrating a fragmented 'rape fantasy' in which Tereus imagines his possession and objectification - that is, his rape - of Philomela:

> impetus est illi comitum corrumpere curam
> nutricisque fidem nec non ingentibus ipsam
> sollicitare datis totumque inpendere regnum
> aut rapere et saeuo raptam defendere bello;
> et nihil est, quod non effreno captus amore
> ausit, nec capiunt inclusas pectora flammas.

His impulse was to corrupt the care of the girl's companions,
her nurse's fidelity, and even to tempt the girl herself
with rich gifts - to spend his whole kingdom on her
or to rape her and to defend the rape with savage war;
there was nothing which he would not not dare, captured by this
ungovernable lust, and his heart could not contain the flames within.

*Met.*6.461-466

The 'rape fantasy' is reiterated - diffracted - in further references to Tereus' obsession and desire for Philomela, each fractal image of this fantasy emphasising a particular feature of the rape. Thus, as Tereus watches Philomela embrace her father and imagines himself in Pandion's place (*Met.*6.478-482), the incestuous nature of his desire for Philomela, his sister-in-law, is highlighted: the authorial interjection at this point, further emphasising the impiety of this fantasy. Similarly,

as the rest of the palace sleeps and Tereus is kept awake with images of Philomela,[121] the narrative emphasises that Tereus' fantasy represents Philomela not as she is, but as he wants her to be (*Met.*6.490-493)[122]: a fantasy of dominance and mastery.

Resisting the terms of this disunified, fragmented representation of rape, however, presents the resisting reader with something of a double-bind. To resist directly the means of Philomela's objectification - her role as passive victim of Tereus' rape, metaphorical rape and rape fantasy - is to attempt to recuperate Philomela as an active subject. Yet, viewed as an active subject rather than as a passive object - or rather, viewed as an active subject who is objectified - Philomela appears as an unstable and problematic figure. Her active subjectivity may be seen to suggest her active complicity in her own objectification. While this need not necessarily be regarded negatively - as suggested by the active complicity of Pygmalion's *puella* in her 'self-objectification' - Philomela's active engagement in her self-objectification suggests a more challenging form of complicity: complicity in her own rape.

Rereading the story of Philomela, Procne and Tereus, the suggestion of Philomela's self-objectification and complicity in her rape is highlighted at the point of her first appearance in the narrative, where her beauty and dress are identified as the stimulants of Tereus' uncontrollable desire (*Met.*6.451-458).[123] Philomela's complicity is then figured 'literally' as she adds her prayers and entreaties to those of her would-be rapist in begging Pandion to allow her to go with Tereus to Thrace, the narrative identifying her desire with that of Tereus: '*quid, quod idem Philomela cupit, patriosque lacertis / blanda tenens umeros, ut eat uisura sororem, / perque suam contraque suam petit ipsa salutem.*' (*Met.*6.475-477). Moreover, when Pandion eventually agrees to entrust Philomela to Tereus' care, it is in response to the prayers of his daughters that he finally concedes (*Met.*6.483 - '*uincitur ambarum genitor prece*'): Philomela is seen literally *to ask* for what she gets.

Indeed, it might be suggested that even after her rape, Philomela similarly *asks* to have her tongue cut out: it is her eloquent speech and her threats to make public

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[121] The motif of the lover kept awake by illegitimate desires while others sleep peacefully is a traditional literary *topos*. Cf. Myrrha (*Met.*10.368ff) and Dido (*Aen.*4.80ff and 522ff).
[122] Upon first seeing Philomela, Tereus similarly imagines her in terms of his own fantasy rather than as she actually appears. Cf. *Met.*6.451-454.
[123] Cf. *Met.*1.547 where Daphne blames her beauty for Apollo's rape attempt against her.

Tereus' crime, that may be seen to make her rapist carry out this further attack of mutilation. Moreover, Philomela's words are represented in the narrative as inciting and encouraging Tereus' actions in similar terms to those employed to describe the ways in which her appearance and her entreaties to her father were previously seen to incite and encourage Tereus' fantasies of rape and his subsequent act of rape: in each case, Philomela is presented as providing the 'stimuli' which - albeit indirectly - (a)rouse Tereus.[124]

The sense of Philomela's complicity in the rape and the attachment of some degree of 'guilt' to her for her part in it, even as that of victim, is reiterated in this eloquent speech to Tereus. Thus, Philomela refers to the *crimen* that is now hers, having been made a victim of rape: '*atque utinam fecisses ante nefandos / concubitos: uacuas habuissem criminis umbras.*' (*Met.*6.540f).[125] Similarly, having been rescued by Procne, Philomela's sense of shame is compounded by a sense of guilt that her part in the rape has made her a sexual rival to her own sister: '*sed non attollere contra / sustinet haec oculos paelex sibi uisa sororis ...*' (*Met.*6.605f).

In the *Ars Amatoria*, the *praeceptor amoris* claims that women enjoy rape, and that their resistance to sexual violence, as to other sexual advances, is an act to conceal their desire:[126]

> illa licet non det, non data sume tamen.
> pugabit primo fortassis, et 'improbe' dicet:
> pugnando uinci se tamen illa uolet.
> tantum ne noceant teneris male rapta labellis,
> neue queri possit dura fuisse, caue.
> oscula qui sumpsit, si non et cetera sumet,
> haec quoque, quae data sunt, perdere dignus erit.
> quantum defuerat pleno post oscula uoto?
> ei mihi, rusticitas, non pudor ille fuit.

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[124] Cf. '*exstimulat*' *Met.*6.459, '*stimulis*' *Met.*6.480, '*stimulatus*' *Met.*6.550.

[125] Cf. *Met.*2.462 where Callisto's shame at having been raped and made pregnant by Jupiter is similarly figured as her 'crimen.' The attribution of 'guilt' to the rape victim is a conventional feature of rape narratives. Following Lucretia's rape by Tarquin in the *Fasti*, her husband and father offer their forgiveness to her - forgiveness which she refuses to accept: '*dant ueniam facto genitor coniunxque coacto: / "quam" dixit "ueniam uos datis, ipsa nego.*"' (*Fas.*2.829f).

[126] The *praeceptor* suggests that a woman who is raped will perceive it as a great compliment or gift: '*et inprobitas muneris instar habet*' (*Ars.*1.676). Procne's words to Tereus, asking her husband to allow her to see her sister, are formulated in a similar way: '*magni mihi muneris instar / germanum uidisse dabis.*' (*Met.*6.443f).

uim licet appelles: grata est uis ista puellis:
quod iuuat, inuitae saepe dedisse uolunt.
quaecumque est ueneris subita uiolata rapina,
gaudet, et inprobitas muneris instar habet.
at quae cum posset cogi, non tacta recessit,
ut simulet uultu gaudia, tristis erit.
uim passa est Phoebe: uis est allata sorori;
et gratus raptae raptor uterque fuit.

Even if she does not give, still take what is not given.
Perhaps she will fight at first, and cry: 'Villain!'
but she will want to be beaten in the fight.
Only so that you do not hurt her tender lips by taking her too roughly,
and so that she may not complain that you have been rough, take care.
He who has taken kisses, if he does not take the rest too,
will deserve to lose even those which were given.
How much was left after kissing to answer your prayer?
Ah, to me that was not modesty, but backwardness.
You may apply force; such force is pleasing to girls.
Often, what pleases them, they desire to give unwillingly:
she who is taken by sudden forceful passion
is happy, and takes the crime as a compliment.
But she who leaves untouched, when she might have been forced,
though her face pretends happiness, will be sad.
Phoebe suffered force; force was brought to bear against her sister;
and each rapist was pleasing to his victim.

Ars 1.664-680

The *praeceptor* claims that '*uim licet apelles*' (*Ars*.1.673), that 'force' or sexual violence may be used against women, and that women will enjoy it. However, he also implies that the application of such 'force' may be identified as 'rape' or not, depending upon interpretation - on what 'you' (and presumeably what the 'victim') want to call it (*apellare*). The *praeceptor* supports his claim with a rereading of the *fabula nota* of Achilles and Deidamia (*Ars*.1.681-704): a reading in which rape is figured as pleasing to both victim and rapist. He suggests that Deidamia wanted the same thing as Achilles, that she wanted to be raped: '*uiribus illa quidem uicta est, ita credere oportet: / sed uoluit uinci uiribus illa tamen.*'

(*Ars*.1.699f).[127] However, as the notion of complicity compromises and negates the resistance of the rape victim, so too it may be seen to compromise and negate the resistance of the resisting reader of rape. Thus, the recuperation and reconfiguration of Philomela as an active subject and the rereading of her rape from this perspective serves to replace one rape fantasy of mastery and domination with another: the (male) fantasy that women want to be dominated.[128]

The focus of this revision and resistance remains firmly fixed upon the figure of the rapist, upon 'his' actions, 'his' violence and 'his' fantasies, upon 'his' active objectification of the passive female figure. This mode of resistance against a male-biased, male authored narrative thus seems more like a mode of compliance: the (woman) reader resisting the (masculine) force of the text only to submit to its mastery, to re-affirm and to 'reproduce' its authority. For, just as Procne remains trapped within a male dominated system of violence, despite her resistance as an active subject - her violent revenge against Tereus reproducing the same conditions of mastery and objectification, the same violence and cruelty as those effected by Tereus - so too is the resisting reader 'trapped' by the restrictions of an active/masculine/subject - passive/feminine/object dichotomy. Movement within this system, it seems, is not escape from the system. Re-vision may not always offer resolution.

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[127] A similar story of rape with a similarly 'happy ending' follows directly after the story of Philomela, Procne and Tereus in the *Metamorphoses*: the rape of Orithyia by Boreas, concluding with their 'marriage' and the birth of the couple's twin sons, Calais and Zetes (*Met*.6.675-721). Tereus' rape of Philomela ends 'unhappily' without a successful union and without the traditional birth of a child: inverting the traditional conclusion to rape narratives, a marriage is destroyed and a child killed. On the convention of 'happy endings' in stories of rape, particularly in New Comedy, cf. Fantham 1975.

[128] Julie Hemker (1985) considers the ironic tone of the *praeceptor* in the *Ars Amatoria* to undermine his theories about women and rape. She suggests that his exaggerated style draws attention to the unreliability of his words: 'as if the whole poem were in quotation marks and the quotation marks nullified the content.'(Cf. Richlin 1992b, 168 against Hemker's reading of Ovid's rapes.) She argues, moreover, that within this context, the rapes represented in the *Ars Amatoria* may be seen to offer a condemnatory perspective of rape emphasising, from 'the women's perspective', its violence and its horror. (Hemker 1985,45). The fantasy of female complicity in rape, it is implied, is thus exposed *as* a (male) fantasy.

Re-appropriation

Resisting Readings of Women

Quite simply, the women don't know what they are saying; that's the whole difference between them and me.
Lacan *Séminaire* XX

In order for the woman reader to reread, revise, and re-appropriate the dominant and dominating 'master' narratives of male biased texts she must, in some way, transform herself into a resisting reader. Judith Fetterley offers one model of such a reader, suggesting the form that she (or he) might assume and presenting an image of the readings that she might produce. Other models, however, are always available, and in the *Metamorphoses* Ovid offers (at least) two: Juno and Echo. Both female figures resist the misogyny and misunderstanding of male figures who would speak for them. They both resist the restricted authority and positions of powerlessness that are assigned to them. They resist the constraints of a 'man-made language' and its claims to represent the truth, one truth, about knowledge, experience, and in particular, *jouissance*. Fetterley's resisting reader challenges the notion that male biased literary texts speak of universally valid truths about human experience, arguing that such representations of the human experience effectively represent a male experience that ignores and occludes the difference(s) of female experience. In a similar way Ovid's resisting readers - and resisting readers of Ovid - challenge the legitimacy of male biased and male authored accounts of female experience, highlighting the failure of such narratives to account for female difference, to account for the difference(s) between men and women.

In Lacanian terms, the difference between men and women is simple: gender difference is determined by language. Lacan claims that 'Quite simply, the women don't know what they are saying; that's the whole difference between them and me.'[1] However, this 'answer' to the question of what determines sexual difference is not as simple and straightforward as Lacan would like us to believe. It raises a number of further difficult questions: how does a man like Lacan *know* what women know? On what authority does he base his knowledge of the minds of women? It certainly isn't by listening to them or by talking with them - despite his background in psychoanalysis. For Lacan believes that women 'don't know what

[1] Lacan 1975, 65

they are saying': there would be no point in asking them what they think they know or what they think they might be saying.

In the Lacanian 'just-so-story' of language and gender identity, the acquisition and development of language is analogous to the Ovidian story of the creation of the cosmos from chaos - the development of order from disorder. Following a period of (linguistic) disorder and identity with the Semiotic - as represented by a female, maternal force - the (speaking) subject comes to realise its 'difference' from and within this force and thus enters the Symbolic - as represented by a male, paternal force.[2] The primary force of the Semiotic, however, like the primordial chaos, prefigures the subsequent state of order and bears the potential to disrupt that order at any moment. Its chaotic elements are only provisionally ordered by the paternal authority of the Father, a figure like Ovid's *opifex*, who imposes boundaries and restrictions upon the chaotic/Semiotic disorder, asserting (male) law and order - the Law of the Father - and suppressing (female) disorder.

Lacan's claim that it is language - rather than specifically biology or anatomy - that distinguishes the sexes is also highly problematic. The basis of this claim lies in the Lacanian belief that power, language and knowledge are related to the phallus; quite simply, therefore, men may possess power, language and knowledge because - anatomically speaking - they possess a symbol of the phallus, while women are deprived of linguistic power, knowledge and authority because they lack this anatomical symbol.[3] Direct parallels between the penis and phallus are resisted within this account of sexual difference, but Lacan's denial that the two are related is frustrating. Mary Ann Doane asks the key question: 'does the phallus

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[2] Fox Keller 1983, 197, cites Leowald on the emergence of identity from the chaotic forces of the Semiotic: 'Against the threatening possibility of remaining in or sinking back into the structureless unity from which the ego emerged stands the powerful paternal force ... While the primary narcissistic identity with the mother forever constitutes the deepest unconscious origin and structural layer of ego and reality, and the motive force for the ego's remarkable striving toward unification, synthesis - this primary identity is also the source of the deepest dread, which promotes, in identity with the father, the ego's progressive differentiation and structuralization of reality.'

[3] Men are privileged because they possess a symbol of the phallus, women are deprived of linguistic power because they lack it, even though in Lacanian terms, the phallus is claimed to have no designated external referent in the penis. Quite what the phallus relates to, if not the penis, is unclear. Alice Jardine (1985, 139) suggests that whatever its relation 'The woman reader, in any case, knows that it is most certainly not hers.' For further discussions of this issue cf: Cornell 1993; Fuss 1989, Gallop 1982 amd 1985.

really have nothing to do with the penis, no commerce with it at all?'[4] She claims that efforts to disassociate the two are made in vain.[5]

> There is a sense in which all attempts to deny the relation between the phallus and the penis are feints, veils, allusions. The phallus, as signifier, may no longer *be* the penis, but any effort to conceptualise its function is inseparable from an imaging of the body.

Within this Lacanian narrative of sexual identity and language then, biology and anatomy *are* significant. Indeed, it is specifically the male and female anatomies that are seen to determine the difference between men and women; between those who possess a symbol of the phallus, and those who do not; between those who possess linguistic power, knowledge and authority, and those who do not. Yet Lacan's gender hierarchy is not only determined by language, it is also constituted through language and herein lies a potential challenge to the order of this system.

In order for language to be meaningful it must maintain the ability to be understood differently by different subjects. Such 'inter-subjectivity', however, requires the signs and signifiers of which language is structured to be over-determined, thereby sacrificing stability for iterability and the potential for communication. According to Kelly Oliver:'[6]

> The absolute signified cannot be the end point of signification ... because it would put an end to signification. There would be no need to say any more; we keep talking because of the over-determination of the signifier.

Since language is made up of signs that are over-determined and unstable, lacking a basis in any specifically designated external referent, this potential for communication is also a potential for slippage and reinterpretation. The phallus, for example, has no absolute grounding in the anatomical referent of the penis, and can be employed as a signifier for a number of different purposes. Words as signs must operate within a determined context in order to limit their potential signification and to generate meaning. Yet context is neither stable nor politically and ideologically neutral, requiring continuous negotiation and confirmation

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[4] Doane 1988, 220
[5] Ibid, 221
[6] Oliver 1993b, 3

between subjects, and so, while allowing the possibility of interpretation, also allowing the possibility of reinterpretation, misinterpretation, disagreement, and criticism.

Linguistically constructed in this way, and lacking any firm grounding in a biological foundation, the structures of gender hierarchy, together with those of gender identity, are unstable and open to potential slippage, stability once again having to be sacrificed for iterability. A rigid gender hierarchy is therefore impossible to sustain, its instability further destabilising theories which describe the relationship between subject and language as one based upon gender identity. Yet the unified speaking or reading subject is often perceived to determine meaning from a pre-discursive position that is always already gendered as either male or female.

From this perspective, the basis of gender identity and difference, sex, appears to operate as a transcendental signifier, in operation both externally and prior to the process of signification; its meaning somehow a pre-meaning that structures all other meaning - perhaps as the 'causal principle' or 'omnipresent meaning' described by Foucault. Foucault claims that:[7]

> the notion of 'sex' made it possible to group together, in an artificial unity, anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations and pleasures, and it enabled one to make use of this fictitious unity as a causal principle, an omnipresent meaning. Sex was thus able to function as a unique signifier and as a universal signified.

According to Foucault, however, sex is neither a pre-determined nor pre-determining concept, but rather the product of culturally and historically specific power relations. The subject does not enter language already sexed, but gains a provisionally sexed identity through and within language. The subject may be seen to inhabit a position in relation to language that is not only determined by the effects of linguistic power relations, but which is also inherently unstable and unpredictable, as all discursive constructs must be. A subject, whose identity is linguistically construed as that of a woman, then, may hold a problematic relationship with language, depending upon the culturally and historically specific

[7] Foucault 1978,154

power relations affecting her position. But this position and this relationship may always be undermined and transformed.

This view of the relationship between subject and language perceives the production and operation of identity and meaning, not as a structured system of signs, but as a signifying process. Emphasis is placed upon the identity of the subject as a subject-in-process, and in the context of discursive power relations, as a subject-on-trial, akin to the 'sujet en procés' described by the theory of semanalysis - Julia Kristeva's 'history of transformation'. Through the process of semanalysis, Kristeva attempts to reconcile theories of language with theories of the subject, claiming that any theory of one always encompasses the other. Influenced by Lacan's theory that the Unconscious of the subject is structured like a language, she combines the principles of semiotics and psychoanalysis to develop a theory that seeks to account for the non-linguistic elements in the process of language: nonsense, silence, rhythm, and tone - and their relationship with the repressed elements of the subject-in-process: pleasure, transgression, sexuality and identity. She seeks to describe and account for the elements of chaos and disorder that operate within the ostensibly ordered system of language and signification.

Kristeva's theory of semanalysis ostensibly challenges the Lacanian narrative of 'the Symbolic' - an expression of the paternal law that is seen to structure and order the signifying process of language and to operate as the organising principle of patriarchal culture. According to Kristeva,[8]

> [The Symbolic] creates the possibility of meaningful language and, hence, meaningful experience, ... by suppressing multiple meanings (which always recall the libidinal multiplicity which characterised the primary relation to the maternal body) and instating univocal and discrete meanings in their place.

Kristeva asserts that signification is heterogeneous - dependent for its meaning upon the interaction between the symbolic and semiotic dimensions of language. She claims that meaning is constituted through the dialectic of symbolic stability and semiotic iterability, between order and disorder. According to Oliver, 'Her unique thesis is that language itself, signification itself, culture itself, and meaning

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[8] Butler 1993a, 164

itself are heterogeneous. That is, they are composed of, and contain, elements of non-language and non-meaning.'[9] Furthermore, accepting the Lacanian narrative that describes the structure of the Unconscious as like a language, Kristeva maintains that the Unconscious must also be heterogeneous - operating upon the dialectic between the Symbolic and the Semiotic. She therefore argues that the speaking subject must also be heterogeneous, the heterogeneity of the individual's unconscious, and of the signifying process, undermining the unity and stability of the subject and suggesting instead an unpredictable subject-in-process.

For Kristeva, patterns of symmetry may be drawn between the subject-in-process of language and the subject-in-process of psychoanalysis.[10] She describes the self as a 'strange land of border and otherness, ceaselessly constructed and deconstructed',[11] suggesting that self knowledge, and perhaps more significantly self-representation, can only be achieved by a knowledge and understanding of those processes, both linguistic and non-linguistic, through and in which the identity of the self is structured. Transforming those structures of theoretical analysis that would appear to 'privilege in signifying practice the moment of stability, and not of crisis',[12] Kristeva emphatically privileges elements such as silence and nonsense, transgression and sexuality, as chaotic forms of subversion and transformation. Furthermore, she represents these unruly elements of subversion and transformation as features of a feminine principle, figured as the female maternal body. This representation appears ostensibly in opposition, but also conceivably in partnership, to Lacan's representation of paternal law as the masculine principle that structures all linguistic signification by emphasising conventions and norms, stability and unity. In effect, by suppressing and ordering the feminine principle that Kristeva seeks to recuperate.

Judith Butler's analysis of Kriseteva's 'body politics' emphasises the potentially chaotic disorder of the feminine force of the Semiotic and identifies the masculine force of the Symbolic as the agency which works to impose order upon this chaos:[13]

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[9] Oliver 1993a, 104. I would debate the critic's identification of language, signification *et al* as reified 'things in themselves' in Kristeva's analysis. Like the signifying subject, these too may be seen to be 'in process'.
[10] The two are not identical, however.
[11] Kristeva 1989, 92
[12] Kristeva 1973, 519
[13] Butler 1993a, 164

> According to Lacan, the paternal law structures all linguistic signification, termed 'the symbolic,' and so becomes a universal organizing principle of culture itself. This law creates the possibility of meaningful language and, hence, meaningful experience, through the repression of primary libidinal drives, including the radical dependency of the child on the maternal body. ... The libidinal chaos characteristic of that early dependency is now fully constrained by a unitary agent whose language is structured by that law. This language, in turn, structures the world by suppressing multiple meanings (which always recall the libidinal multiplicity which characterized the primary relation to the maternal body) and instating univocal and discrete meanings in their place.

As a theory that seeks to interpret the individual subject as though he or she were a text, with some accommodation, Kristeva's semanalysis may also be employed as a tool for interpreting individual texts. Poetic texts in particular, may be seen to benefit from such analysis, poetic language, perhaps more than any other discursive form, incorporating elements of both the Symbolic and the Semiotic. The text of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* moreover, may be seen, like Kristeva's theory, to privilege moments of crisis over those of stability,[14] and to represent the subject not as a unified individual, but as a subject-in-process - the subject of metamorphosis. Indeed, the text may also be seen, in some respects, as a text-in-process, in turn drawing attention to the instability of the theory-in-process on which its interpretation is based. Thus, the same 'process' employed to produce a critical semanalysis of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* may also be used to produce a critical reading of Kristeva's own semanalysis.

Critics of Kristeva's representation of the female body, and in particular, her emphasis upon its disruptive and reproductive potential, suggest that Kristeva seeks not only to ground the signifier Woman in non-discursive 'anatomical elements' and 'biological functions', but also to occlude the concept of maternity as a culturally and historically determined construct. Moreover, it may be argued that Kristeva's theory fails to recognise that, as a discursive product, all the signs and signifiers it employs, including those of the female body and the feminine principle, are formulated according to the masculine principles of the very paternal law it claims to subvert. Yet, perhaps most crucially, Kristeva's theory also appears to fail fundamentally to sustain its own principles of instability and

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[14] It may be argued, however, that an emphasis upon chaos, crisis and change also involves an inevitable emphasis upon order, stability and continuity. Cf. chapter 1.

disorder,[15] the female body and the feminine principle it advocates represented as stable, knowable concepts, the maternal body only the host to a subject-in-process, rather than the subject-in-process herself. Judith Butler is also critical of Kristeva's theory. She warns:[16]

> Any theory that asserts that signification is predicated upon the denial or repression of a female principle ought to consider whether that femaleness is really external to the cultural norms by which it is repressed.

She also suggests that, while the suppression of this subversive female principle is essential to the success of patriarchal culture, the liberation of this principle may not be entirely positive: un-suppressed, it is potentially chaotic, making the individual and society vulnerable to psychosis and cultural breakdown.

Kristeva's own writing also demonstrates some elements of the confusion, imprecision, and crisis that her theory of semanalysis privileges, and that Butler warns against. As we have seen, the theory of semanalysis is apparently undermined by the very principles it seeks to promote, while Kristeva's criticisms of other feminist theorists who posit language as a phallocentric male construct appear to contradict her identification of the feminine with the non-discursive, unspoken elements of language. Indeed, Kristeva's criticism of theorists such as Irigaray, for identifying the feminine with the Semiotic rather than the Symbolic, may be read as a critique of Kristeva herself:[17]

> If one assigns to woman that phase alone, this in fact amounts to maintaining women in a position of inferiority, and in any case marginality, to reserving them the place of the childish, of the unsayable, of the hysteric.

However, while Kristeva may also be seen to identify Woman and the feminine with the Semiotic aspect of language and signification, her consistent and emphatic insistence upon the heterogeneity of language, signification, culture and meaning - and above all, her insistence upon the heterogeneity of the subject - establishes her difference from those feminist theorists she criticises. Far from

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[15] Although, perhaps this should be seen, not as a weakness, but as a necessary feature of 'chaotic' systems.
[16] Butler 1993a, 77
[17] Baruch & Serrano 1988, 134

assigning, maintaining or reserving any one position for women, Kristeva points to the instability and mutability of all positions, claiming that the heterogeneous subject-in-process inhabits all, and is restricted to none. According to Kristeva, the play of the dialectic between symbolic stability and semiotic iterability makes any unified position not only untenable, but also meaningless. In terms of signification, the 'Semiotic' is not the same signifier as the 'feminine', nor the same signified as 'Woman'. Such concepts are not unified but heterogeneous, overlapping but not identical. Linear parallels asserting correspondence or assimilation may not be drawn neatly between them.

Kristeva grants access to the Semiotic and the Symbolic, to both women and men; her figure of the (semiotic) maternal body is gendered in order to contrast and to complement the Lacanian figure of the (symbolic) phallus, but is not identical with the biologically determined reproductive potential of woman, any more than the phallus is identical with the anatomy of man. By highlighting the significance of heterogeneity and difference in language, Kristeva seeks to avoid setting up a gender hierarchy, like that posited by Irigaray, in which women are placed 'in a position of inferiority':[18]

> Our only chance to avoid being neither master nor slave of meaning lies in our ability to insure our mastery of it (through technique or knowledge) as well as our passage through it (through play or practice). In a word, *jouissance*: joying in the truth of self-division.

Thus, Kristeva appears to suggest that it may be possible for women and men to inhabit a heterogeneous position, incorporating both masculine and feminine principles, and identifying with the Semiotic as well as the Symbolic structures of language. Such a plural position, whose fluctuating stance might better be described as a 'process', offers the speaking subject-in-process, both male and female, access to poetic language - the place where paternal law and feminine subversion meet. Poetic language combines elements of both the Symbolic and the Semiotic; its non-signifying elements of rhythm and tone are as meaningful as its words; its signifiers and signifieds are conspicuously over-determined while maintaining their role in the signifying process of language. Moreover, poetic language draws attention to language and signification as a process, offering the poet and the reader the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery and knowledge of

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[18] Kristeva 1980, 89

language and signification, as well as their play and passage through it: to demonstrate the truth of their *jouissance*.

Re-appropriation

Resisting Tiresias

So all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem.
T S Eliot, *The Waste Land*[19]

Kristeva's concern with the truth of *jouissance*[20] and self-division is a concern that may also be seen to operate as a central feature of Ovid's representation of the prophet Tiresias in book three of the *Metamorphoses*. Tiresias is rare among the characters of the poem in his experience of a temporary transformation,[21] spending seven years as a woman as the result of once striking two copulating snakes with his staff. Tiresias is thus the only individual subject who might be considered to have direct knowledge of the different *jouissance* experienced by men and women, and his introduction into the narrative is based upon that premise. Jupiter and Juno are described, disagreeing on the question of whether men or women experience greater *uoluptas* or *jouissance*, but since neither can comment with any authority upon the sexual pleasure experienced by the opposite sex, Tiresias, with his experience of both, is called in to arbitrate.

> forte Iouem memorant diffusum nectare curas
> seposuisse graues uacuaque agitasse remissos
> cum Iunone iocos et 'maior uestra profecto est,
> quam quae contingit maribus' dixisse 'uoluptas.'
> illa negat. placuit quae sit sententia docti
> quaerere Tiresiae: Venus huic erat utraque nota.
> nam duo magnorum uiridi coeuntia silua
> corpora serpentem baculi uiolauerat ictu
> deque uiro factus (mirabile) femina septem

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[19] This note to line 218 of *The Waste Land* claims that: 'Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a 'character', is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest.' Cf. Medcalf 1988, 234. Medcalf observes - with significance for readers and critics seeking unity in the *Metamorphoses* - that: 'The note is beloved by scholars and critics anxious to demonstrate the unity of *The Waste Land*, for it suggests that to the serious, the sophisticated, the scholarly, in short to the initiated, there is a hidden unity under the mystery which the uninitiated may be rebuked for not perceiving.'

[20] Kristeva's interpretation of *jouissance* as a term with multiple and indeterminate significance differs from that of Lacan - demonstrating the heterogeneity of language and meaning. One of these plural meanings might be equated with sexual pleasure or *uoluptas*.

[21] Other characters who experience temporary metamorphoses include Io (*Met.*1.568-746); Thetis (*Met.*11.221-265); and Vertumnus (*Met.*14.632-771). Other characters who also experience transformations in sex include Alcithoe (*Met.*4.378f); Sithon (*Met.*4.279f); Iphis (*Met.*9.666-797); and Caeneus (*Met.*12.146-209).

egerat autumnos; octauo rursus eosdem
uidit, et 'est uestrae si tanta potentia plagae'
dixit, 'ut auctoris sortem in contraria mutet,
nunc quoque uos feriam.' percussis anguibus isdem
forma prior rediit, genetiuaque uenit imago.
arbiter hic igitur sumptus de lite iocosa
dicta Iouis firmat: grauius Saturnia iusto
nec pro materia fertur doluisse suique
iudicis aeterna damnauit lumina nocte;
at pater omnipotens (neque enim licet inrita cuiquam
facta dei fecisse deo) pro lumine adempto
scire futura dedit poenamque leuauit honore.

It happened that Jove, they say, mellowed with nectar
put aside his cares and without seriousness bandied
playful jokes with Juno. 'Your *jouissance* is definitely
greater than that which men experience.' he said.
She denied it. They decided to ask the opinion
of learned Tiresias: he knew both sides of Venus.
For once he had disturbed two huge snakes,
mating in the green forest, with a blow from his staff,
and from man (amazingly) he was made a woman,
spending seven years so; in the eighth s/he saw the same snakes
again and said, 'If in striking you there is such power
to change the sex of that striker to the opposite
now I will strike you again.' Striking the snakes,
his former shape was restored, and he took on the shape
with which he'd been born.
So he, assuming the role of judge in this playful dispute,
confirmed Jove's words: Saturnia was aggrieved, they say,
unreasonably and more seriously than the subject deserved,
and she condemned the eyes of the judge to eternal night.
But the omnipotent father (for it is not permitted that any god
should undo what another god has done) for his loss of sight
gave Tiresias power to know the future, lightening the punishment
with this honour.

Met. 3.318-338

In this context authority is granted to the direct experience of those 'sensations and pleasures' described by Foucault as constituting the basis of sex, and therefore of sexual difference. It is assumed that sexual difference is marked by a difference in the experience of sexual pleasure, and that this experience forms part of the wider experience of 'being' male or female. This notion of the authority of experience informs, in various ways, a significant proportion of those discursive theories that seek to describe and define sexual difference - including a number of feminist theories which attempt to ground their definitions of Woman in the lived experience of women. However, such attempts to posit the experience of the individual as *the* universal experience are based upon a series of highly problematic pre-suppositions.

It is assumed that the individual is a coherent, unified subject, rather than a subject-in-process, whose experience is also coherent and unified; it is assumed that the subject has an unproblematic relationship with language, and that the personal account of her experience is linguistically coherent; and it is assumed that the experience of the individual is entirely objective, that it can be recognised and represented without interpretation. Thus, any attempt to ground an interpretation of sexual difference in the experience of sexual pleasure would appear to be fundamentally unsound. For simply to recognise an experience as such may be considered an act of interpretation: an assertion that 'some*thing* really happened'. To label that experience as relating to sexual pleasure and therefore to sexual difference, is to place it within a context determined by yet further interpretation - all of which is ideologically charged, there being no neutral interpretation.

As the representation of Tiresias in the *Metamorphoses* may be seen to suggest, individual subjects, like their interpretations, are themselves ideologically charged, lacking neutrality. Such is the problem with Tiresias as *arbiter* in the dispute between Jupiter and Juno. For as a discursive subject, Tiresias is sexually pre-determined as a man: his interpretation of his lived experience is made 'as a man'. Thus, his experience of sexual pleasure, as well as his experience of woman, is as a man - his judgement and interpretation, therefore, far from neutral. Indeed, it is unsurprising when he makes his judgement in support of Jupiter's claim that women experience greater *jouissance* than men (*Met.*3.333): his interpretation of the question of sexual difference, like Jupiter's, is made from a male perspective, despite his experience of sexual transformation.

The representation of Tiresias' metamorphosis in the poem is suitably ambiguous, with emphasis apparently placed upon the transformation of his outward appearance and physical sex, rather than upon any essential change in his identity. He is made a woman "*deque viro factus . . . femina*" (*Met.*3.326), but no details of his transformation are offered, the authorial interjection "*mirabile*" (*Met.*3.326), less of an observation than an occlusion. The close juxtaposition of *vir* and *femina*, effectively separated only by the participle *factus*,[22] also suggests that the transformed Tiresias is more of a feminised man than a woman. His transformation back into a man is represented in similarly ambiguous terms. Addressing the snakes responsible for his metamorphosis, he describes his change as one of *sors* (*Met.*3.329) - as a change of his given sex[23] - while the narrative relating the recovery of his former sex describes this significantly in terms of a change in external *forma* and *imago* (*Met.*3.331), rather than in terms of an essential change.

Tiresias' 'sex-changes' thus raise some of the fundamental questions still to be resolved by feminist and gender theorists. Is sexual identity to be perceived as predetermined and essential? Is gender to be seen as performed and non-essential? It would appear that, like the other victims of transformation in the *Metamorphoses*, Tiresias retains his masculine identity despite the change to his physical form, becoming a man in a woman's body, rather than a 'real' woman in any sense.[24] In the narrative Tiresias' reference to his own metamorphosis as a transformation of '*sors*', suggests that he views his sexual identity as something that is predetermined, that one sex or the other (*contraria*) is allotted to the individual and it is this sexual identity with which one is born.

However, the narrator describes this same sexual identity - that which one is allotted at birth - as an expression or function of form and appearance. So, upon striking the snakes for a second time, the changes to Tiresias' sexual identity are marked by the changes to his shape and appearance - *forma prior rediit, genetiuaque uenit imago* (*Met.*3.331). Yet, like other characters in the *Metamorphoses*,[25] who become animals yet retain their human identities through

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[22] It is tempting to say 'separated only by the act.'

[23] Tiresias' sex it appears is predetermined. He is always already male.

[24] Much as Io is considered to become a woman in a cow's body, rather than a 'real' cow.

[25] Cf. Lycaon (*Met.*1.163-252); Io (*Met.*1.568-746); Callisto (*Met.*2.401-530); Actaeon (*Met.*3.138-252). All retain a sense of their former 'human' identity despite their physical trans*form*ation.

their external transformation of *forma* and *imago*, Tiresias becomes a woman and remains a man. He becomes a woman but retains his former *male*, or rather, his former *masculine* identity. He seems to change his sex but to retain his gender.[26]

The idea that Tiresias remains 'essentially' a man even as a woman is maintained, though perhaps not deliberately, in various translations of his metamorphosis. While the Latin has no need to posit a specifically masculine or feminine subject as the agent who sees and speaks to the snakes in this episode, English translations of the story require the subject to be gendered. Thus, the potential ambiguity of the Latin is lost for a rendering that traditionally figures Tiresias as unambiguously male:

> . . . in the eighth (year) *he* saw the snakes once more
> And said 'If striking you has magic power
> To change the striker to the other sex,
> I'll strike you now again.' *He* struck the snakes
> And so regained the shape *he* had at birth.[27]

Ted Hughes' 1997 'translation' of the story is unusual in its ready transformation of the gendered personal pronoun in reflection of Tiresias' own transformation:[28]

> He came across two serpents copulating.
> He took the opportunity to kill
> Both with a single blow, but merely hurt them -
> And found himself transformed into a woman.
>
> After the seventh year of womanhood,
> Strolling to ponder on what women ponder
> She saw in that same place the same two serpents
> Knotted as before in copulation.
> 'If your pain can still change your attacker
> Just as you once changed me, then change me back.'
> She hit the couple with a handy stick,

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[26] In some respect, nearly all feminist studies engage with the problematic distinction(s) between sex and gender. In particular, cf. Jardine 1985, Fuss 1989, and Butler 1990.
[27] Melville, 1986, 6. Emphases mine.
[28] Hughes, 1997 *Tiresias* lines 17-29

> And there he stood as male as any man.'

Unlike Melville's translation, Hughes' version of the story emphasises the transformation of masculine to feminine subject. Yet his description of Tiresias' experience of (t)his metamorphosis maintains the suggestion that Tiresias remains 'essentially' a man despite his physical transformation, his change in form. At or immediately after the moment of metamorphosis, Tiresias 'found *himself* transformed into a woman.' and later, strolling in the green wood his mind turned 'to ponder on what women ponder', subtle indications of his ambiguous status.

The semantic challenge raised by Tiresias' sexual transformation may be seen to illustrate the point that sexual identity, as well as sexual difference, is linguistically produced: the sex of the individual is determined by and within a discourse that simultaneously seeks to represent sex as a predetermined and pre-discursive essence - a given. Tiresias' linguistically determined, essential sex then is emphatically male: even his representation as a woman apparently serves only to emphasise his masculinity. As a woman, Tiresias continues to walk in the green wood (presumably alone?), staff in hand, ready to do violence to any snakes caught in coitus: an unusual image of femininity.

It might be suggested that the figure of Tiresias is over-determined as a male in the *Metamorphoses*, and that it is this that produces his punishments and ultimately his fame. Both before and after his metamorphosis into a woman, Tiresias is represented as an excessively violent figure. His attack upon the snakes found mating in the wood seems unnecessarily aggressive, and is represented in the narrative as a form of violation - 'baculi *uiolauerat* ictu' (*Met.*3.325) - as he strikes them with his staff. Moreover, it is hard not to see this staff - and the snakes themselves - as bearing some kind of phallic significance, (over)emphasising Tiresias' masculinity and virility.[29] Naomi Segal sees Tiresias' striking of the snakes as 'thrice phallic', emphasising the way in which the '*huge serpents* caught in coitus are *struck* by his *staff*.'[30]

The parallels between this act of aggression, its punishment and subsequent reward, and Tiresias' act of arbitration for the gods, with its punishment and

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[29] Although there is no obvious etymological connection beteeen *baculum* (staff) and penis, Adams 1982, 148, comments that the noun *ictus* was used to describe 'the male sexual act', and that *uiolo* (199, 223) might be used to express sexual violence.
[30] Segal 1988, 4. Emphases in original.

subsequent reward, are both evident and ambiguous. In both cases Tiresias acts as the witness in a matter related to sexual activity; in both, he seeks to assert his authority and power; and in both, he is punished by the curtailment of that power, later to be rewarded with its enhancement. For it would seem to be clear that the punishment he suffers, living as a woman for seven years, brings him reward in the knowledge of women - supported by an apparently unique 'authority of experience'. Moreover, it would also seem to be clear that while the blindness inflicted upon him by Juno is a harsh and permanent punishment, it is mitigated by Jupiter's gift of prophecy (*Met.*3.338).

Juno's unreasonable severity is highlighted in the text, the narrative reporting that she took unjustified offence at Tiresias' judgement (*Met.*3.333-35). Yet Juno's behaviour here is mild in comparison with that of Diana, whose cruel punishment of Actaeon meets with a mixed response:

> rumor in ambiguo est; aliis uiolentior aequo
> uisa dea est, alii laudant dignamque seuera
> uirginitate uocant: pars inuenit utraque causas. 255

The response was mixed; to some the goddess seemed
too cruel, others praised her severity and called it worthy
of her virginity: both sides found reasons for their view.
*Met.*3.253-55

Although 'some' regard Diana's response to Actaeon's inadvertent transgression as unjustified, 'others' support her. None it seems support Juno or her treatment of Tiresias, whose blinding of the seer-to-be is in some way a displaced act, usually attributed to Athena, another virgin like Diana, who, in other sources of the myth, punishes Tiresias for the same transgression that is here committed by Actaeon.[31] Juno is represented in this narrative as lacking both a sense of humour and a sense of proportion. Emphasis is given to the light-hearted nature of her dispute with Jupiter, described as '*lite iocosa*' (*Met.*3.332), and the context of the debate is playfully set. The curt representation of Juno's response contrasts markedly with Jupiter's good humour. Yet although the playfulness of the debate on Jove's side

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[31] Cf. Callimachus *The baths of Pallas*. It also seems significant that Juno's unnecessary and unjustified severity should be highlighted in this episode, while an incident such as Apollo's unnecessary and unjustified severity in the flaying of Marsyas should pass unremarked in the narrative (*Met.*6.382-400).

is emphasised, the narrative suggests that a darker side to the gods' 'bantering' may also be evident.

It is significantly Jupiter who is described as mellowed with nectar and carefree, idly debating with Juno (*Met.*3.318-20). Juno's state and attitude to the debate is ambigous: she may be *uacua* (*Met.*3.319), but the significance of this expression does not necessarily position Juno in the same 'idle' mood as Jupiter.[32] The reader might assume that she shares Jupiter's playfulness, but her responses to Jupiter and to Tiresias might be better understood if the carefree attitude of Jove is not seen to be shared by Juno. Juno is not necessarily Jupiter's jovial companion in his light-hearted joking; she may be the victim of his humour. Indeed, the phrase employed to describe Jupiter's 'playful joking' - *agitasse remissos ... iocos* (*Met.*3.319f) - may suggest an element of ridicule and personal attack in his humour, an element that has the power to cause Juno pain and to cause her to grieve (*doluisse* - *Met.*3.334). For while Juno is often represented as the ill-tempered wife of playful Jupiter, in this narrative her anger appears to be at odds with the context of the story. In particular, there seems to be no obvious offence attached to the claim that women experience greater *jouissance* than men. Why is she angry? Why does she take offence in this way? [33]

Kristeva's theory of semanalysis suggests that Jupiter's sense of humour and Juno's lack of one may be seen as another feature of sexual difference. Relating the source of humour, like Freud and Lacan, to the repressed dimension of the unconscious, Kristeva considers laughter to be a product of the play of the repressed semiotic and the temporary breakdown of the Symbolic order. For Kristeva, men and women have different relations to the Semiotic and Symbolic, because of their different relations to the maternal body, and can therefore be seen to experience humour differently. According to Kristeva, men experience a temporary freedom from the restrictive order of the Symbolic when the usually repressed Semiotic is released: their laughter prevents the Symbolic, the paternal order from becoming too oppressive - and at the same time, helps to perpetuate its authority. However, Kristeva claims that women, whose relation to the Symbolic is only provisional, do not experience freedom from the paternal order in the same way. Instead, they experience the threat of confusion and crisis, as the structure

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[32] Thus '*uacua*' - agreeing grammatically with Juno, most obviously suggests idleness and leisure, but might also suggest vacuousness or empty headedness; used of women it can also connote 'freedom', that is unmarried status.

[33] Cf. Glenn 1986, 34: 'Juno, presumeably because her matronly modesty is offended, not because Tiresias is wrong, strikes Tiresias blind, a physical way of indicating that he perceives nothing.'

that usually orders their position as coherent, speaking subjects is broken down. She claims that the play of the Semiotic for a woman - 'far from making her laugh, destroys her symbolic armour: makes her ecstatic, nostalgic, or mad . . . A woman has nothing to laugh about when the paternal order falls.'[34]

While Jupiter may not necessarily be seen to fell the paternal order with his 'joke' about women experiencing greater sexual pleasure than men, his disagreement with Juno on this matter may be considered to challenge the symbolic structure on which that order is based. For his assertion, with its claim to represent the universal experience of man and woman, and Juno's claim to the contrary, draws attention to the inadequacy of language to represent human experience. It highlights the potential in any linguistic system, not only for communication, but also for miscommunication, disagreement, and criticism. The stability and univocality proposed by the Symbolic is subverted by the heterogeneity and instability of the Semiotic, as Jupiter's representation of female *jouissance* conflicts with Juno's representation of the same. While either, or both, of the gods may be lying for their own purpose[35] - their representations deliberate misrepresentations - their disagreement on this issue of sexual difference, nevertheless, emphasises the contingency of the Symbolic and the inherent weakness of its powers of signification. In turn, this highlights the vulnerability of the speaking subject, and for the female speaking subject in particular, the vulnerability of her 'symbolic armour' undermining her very identity as a woman.

However, Juno's anger and lack of humour may also be analysed in terms of the sexual power relations apparently in operation in this episode. Her knowledge and experience, the basis of that knowledge, is denied authority and is re-interpreted and re-presented by men. Jupiter first challenges her authority with his claim to know definitively (*profecto* - *Met.*3.320) that women experience greater *jouissance* than men, and Tiresias, as expected, confirms his words. Authority to speak of and for women is denied the woman and given instead to men. Sandra Harding claims that throughout the history of literature, philosophy and science, it has been so:[36]

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[34] Kristeva 1974, 30. Cf also Kristeva 1983, 77

[35] The rationale of the debate and the basis of the disagreement between Jupiter and Juno is ambiguous.

[36] Harding 1983, x

> What counts as knowledge must be grounded on experience. Human experience differs according to the kinds of activities and social relations in which humans engage. Women's experience systematically differs from the male experience upon which knowledge claims have been grounded. Thus the experience on which the prevailing claims to social and natural knowledge are founded is, first of all, only partial human experience only partially understood: namely, masculine experience as understood by women.

In the *Metamorphoses*, Juno is invited to speak her knowledge of pleasure, not only as a woman, but as a representative of all other women: her representation of the experience of sexual pleasure is represented as the experience of her sex - of Woman. However, the discourse in which her representation must be formed appears to be constrained by a male authority. Not only is her denial in response to Jupiter's claim to know of woman's pleasure shaped by his assertion, but her simple negation is also shaped (and, it might even be said, is also silenced) by the poet's representation of her words (*illa negat* - *Met.*3.322). Juno's denial is unrepresented. How does she disagree? Does she speak? Does she shake her head? Quite simply, we do not know what Juno is saying. The voice of (the) woman is effectively silenced: a claim about her is made for her by (a) man; her response is suppressed and disbelieved; the words of an 'objective' male witness are admitted as conclusive; her words, her knowledge, and her experience are dismissed.

The apparent negativity attached to this representation of Juno in the *Metamorphoses* is significant. Not only is the tone of her voice negative, but her words are ignored as meaningless, as if she had not spoken at all; her ill-humour is contrasted as a negative reflection of Jupiter's good humour; her blinding of Tiresias deprives him of his sight, but is rendered insignificant by Jupiter's gift to him of prophetic vision - Juno's negative action, itself negated by Jupiter's more positive act. According to Lacan, however, such negativity may be seen to relate to Juno's feminine identity and her position as a woman in the Symbolic order. For in the Lacanian narrative, Woman not only lacks the phallus,[37] but lacking a penis, she is also different from the phallus, and within the Symbolic order, within language, she can therefore only be identified as difference and lack - as the negative.

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[37] Both sexes are considered to lack the phallus, but the possession of a penis offers a 'symbolic' substitute to men.

Re-appropriation

Kristeva asserts that, according to this Lacanian identification of Woman and the feminine, "feminist practice can only be negative, at odds with what already exists so that we may say 'that's not it' and 'that's still not it'. Indeed, it is possible to consider Juno's response to both Jupiter's and Tiresias' representations of female *jouissance* as her way of saying 'that's not it' and 'that's still not it'.[38] Juno's model of resistance then, appears to be a model of rejection rather than revision or re-appropriation: a negative practice, 'at odds with what already exists.' Without offering a representation of her own *jouissance* or that of her sex, and without engaging in the dialogue or with the dialogue of Jupiter and Tiresias, she rejects their representations of her experience. She throws them out.[39]

Women it seems, cannot speak of the universal experience of Woman, except to say what it is not, while men may attempt to speak of and for Woman, but can only represent her difference from themselves: 'they tell us about masculine subjectivity, not about Woman.'[40] From this perspective, it is perhaps unsurprising that Ovid's account of female *jouissance* in the *Metamorphoses* should appear to share several similarities with an account by Lacan on the same. Rather than asking women to offer accounts of their own experience(s) of *jouissance*, Lacan turns to a silent woman whose experience and knowledge of *jouissance* is mediated 'for her' by a man.[41] Describing the inability of women to understand their own sexual pleasure or *jouissance* by refering to Bernini's statue of an ecstatic Saint Teresa, Lacan comments:[42]

> Saint Teresa - you only have to go look at the Bernini statue in Rome to understand immediately she's coming, no doubt about it. And what is she enjoying, coming from? It's clear that the essential testimony of the mystics is that of saying they experience it but know nothing about it. These mystical ejaculations are neither idle gossip nor mere verbiage, in fact they're the best thing you can read - note, right at the bottem of the

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[38] Kristeva 1974, 267. 'It follows that a feminist practice can only be negative, at odds with what already exists so that we may say 'that's not it' and 'that's still not it'. In 'woman' I see something that cannot be represented, something that is not said, something above and beyond nomenclatures and ideologies. There are certain 'women' who are familiar with this phenomenon; it is what some modern texts never stop signifying: testing the limits of language and sociality - the law and its transgression, mastery and (sexual) pleasure - without reserving one for males and the other for females.' Might this analysis not also be applied to an ancient text, such as the *Metamorphoses*?

[39] Cf. Richlin 1992b, 161

[40] Cornell 1993, 75

[41] Cf. Heath 1992, 51-55. Heath observes that Lacan's reliance on a man-made image of woman - Bernini's statue of St Teresa - compromises his argument *ab initio*.

[42] Lacan 1975, 70. Emphases in original.

> page, *add to them Jacques Lacan's Ecrits*, a work of the same order. Given which, naturally, you're all going to be convinced I believe in God. I believe in the *jouissance* of the woman in so far as it is *en plus*, something more, on condition you block out that *more* until I've thoroughly explained it.

According to the authoratitive word of Lacan, women can have experience of sexual pleasure, but only men can have knowledge of it, and only men can represent that experience in the Symbolic order. Women experience sex - as they experience life - passively, and in order for the testimony of their lives to be coherent, it must be represented by men like Lacan and Bernini, Jupiter and Tiresias. And Ovid. Quite simply, the women don't know what they are saying.

Luce Irigaray challenges the restrictions imposed upon women and their right to speak of their own experiences in their own words. Mimicking and echoing Lacan's words, she challenges his assumption that 'the geography of feminine pleasure is not worth listening to', that 'women are not worth listening to, especially when they try to speak of their pleasure.'[43] She questions the absence of women in the Lacanian account of women's *jouissance*, questioning why 'the right to experience pleasure is awarded to a statue',[44] a man-made representation or construction of a woman, of Woman, and asks why women are not asked or permitted to speak of their own experiences of *jouissance*.[45]

> 'Just go look at Bernini's statue in Rome, you'll see right away that St. Teresa is coming, there's no doubt about it.'
> In Rome? So far away? To look? At a statue? Of a saint? Sculpted by a man? What pleasure are we talking about? Whose pleasure? For where the pleasure of the Theresa in question is concerned, her own writings are perhaps more telling.
> But how can one 'read' them when one is a 'man'? The production of ejaculations of all sorts, often prematurely emitted, makes him miss, in the desire for identification with the lady, what her own pleasure might be all about.
> And ... his?

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[43] Irigaray 1985, 90
[44] Ibid.
[45] Irigaray 1985, 90f

Re-appropriation

Thus, Irigaray challenges Lacan's denial of her - and any woman's - authority to speak (as a woman) of female *jouissance*. She re-appropriates Lacan's own words to make them speak for her, to make them express her own views on female difference and female *jouissance*. She employs Lacan's words to draw attention to the ways in which women's words are silenced in this analysis of women's experience of *jouissance*. She deliberately plays the role of mimic in order to emphasise the mimetic position that discourses such as Lacan's impose upon women. As Toril Moi suggests:[46] 'Hers is a theatrical staging of the mime: miming the miming imposed on woman, Irigaray's subtle specular move (her mimicry *mirrors* that of all women) intends to *undo* the effects of phallocentric discourse simply by *overdoing* them.'[47]

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[46] Cf. Moi 1985, 138-143
[47] On miming cf. chapter 3

Re-appropriation

Fractured symmetries

Echo thus becomes a symbol of those pathetic but annoying females who are extremely responsive but have no initiative or originality of their own.
Fränkel, *Ovid: A poet between two worlds*

'Echo: See Narcissus'
Tissol, *index listing*

Echo may be seen to offer a different model of resistance to that presented by Juno. A model based not on rejection, but on re-appropriation. Denied the power to initiate speech or to produce words of her own, such re-appropriation or echoing of others' words is the only means of verbal communication available to Echo. Reading male authored, and at times misogynist, words she re-appropriates their meaning and reproduces them to express her own views, to represent herself. As Irigaray reproduces and re-appropriates Lacan's (male authored and at times misogynist) words to express her own views on female difference and female *jouissance*, so Echo re-appropriates the words of Narcissus to speak of her own desires - of female *jouissance*. As Irigaray echoes Lacan to emphasise the intersubjectivity of language - its potential to be understood by different subjects allowing the potential for words to be understood differently - so Echo echoes Narcissus.

Irigaray describes this mode of re-appropriation, this form of echoing, as 'mimesis'. She claims that the dominance and authority of language as the vehicle for most forms of signification, communication and identification places linguistic restrictions upon women, forcing them to adopt a man-made language as their own if they are not to remain silent. She sees this restriction as offering women the choice of either mutism or mimicry - the option to be silent or to speak as men. In order to challenge this restriction and to subvert if not necessarily to destroy it, she suggests that women can deliberately take up the latter option, playing the part of mimic on their own terms. She claims that a positive move can be made by women in the deliberate assumption of the reproductive role: that role which is traditionally assigned to them in the masculine system of representation, which (re)presents all women as potential child-bearers. Irigaray characterises the operations of this deliberate form of mimicry, of mimesis, as follows:

> Jouer de la mimésis, c'est donc, pour une femme, tenter de retrouver le lieu de son exploitation par le discours, sans s'y laisser simplement réduire. C'est se re-soumettre ... à des 'idées', notamment d'elle, élaborées dans/par une logique masculine, mais por faire 'apparaitre', par un effet de répétition ludique, ce qui devait rester occulté: le recouvrement d'une possible opération du féminin dans le langage. C'est aussi 'dévoiler' le fait que, si les femmes miment si bien, c'est qu'elles ne se résorbent pas simplement dans cette fonction. *Elles restent aussi ailleurs.*
>
> To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by language, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It is to resubmit herself to 'ideas', particularly to those about her, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make 'visible', by an effect of playful echoing, what was supposed to remain invisible: the recovery of a possible operation of the feminine in language. It is also 'to uncover' the fact that, if women mime so well, it is because they are not simply reabsorbed in this function. *They also remain elsewhere.*[48]

Playing with the codes and constructs of the 'masculine logic' that determines her representation as reality enables a woman to resist the restrictions imposed upon her by that 'logic'. It enables a woman to reveal her (re)presentation as a fiction, to show that Woman, in this system of representation and identification, is 'made-up'. Deliberately playing a role allows a woman to explore and to expose it as a role, to demonstrate that her words are scripted, her character acted. It also allows her, at the same time, to suggest that 'off-stage' she might behave, look, and speak differently. It allows her to suggest that she might have an identity and a voice of her own: that she might 'also remain elsewhere'.

Playing with the codes and conventions that determine her representation in the *Metamorphoses*, Echo too may be seen to demonstrate that her words are scripted and her character acted, to demonstrate that she too may possess an identity and a voice of her own. Echo's leading role in the *Metamorphoses* is that of a lover, and in particular, that of an elegiac lover. Always already playing a part, miming, Echo plays the part of a lover, her role, like her words, already prescribed for her. The codes and conventions that provide her character with a script and directions are those familiar from the traditions of the elegiac genre and from Ovid's own

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[48] Irigaray 1985, 76. The 'echo' is mine.

Amores and *Ars Amatoria*.[49] Thus, adopting and adapting the role conventionally associated with the male elegiac lover - just as she adopts and adapts the words of Narcissus - Echo pursues Narcissus while he, in the role conventionally played by the female *puella dura* of elegy, 'encourages' and then rejects her amorous advances.

Unable to initiate the *blanditiae* traditionally employed by the elegiac lover to win over his *puella dura*, Echo instead waits for Narcissus to make the first move in their one-sided 'courtship', and then mirrors his words and actions, her actions in both respects prescribed by her limited powers of speech and by the *praeceptor amoris* of the *Ars Amatoria*. The *praeceptor* advises that men should initiate the first steps of courtship (*Ars*.1.705), although they should be reassured that it is only due to convention that this is accepted and that according to *natura* it should be women who make the first move (*Ars*.277f, 269f). Echo, of course, because of her *natura* - figured in the narrative as her inability to initiate speech (*Met*.3.376) - cannot make the first move although, as the advice of the *praeceptor* suggests, she longs to.[50]

The *Ars Amatoria*, in particular, promotes the idea that love is an art and that lovers - male and female - play roles, that all professions or expressions of love and desire are artistic constructs: scripts which lovers follow and attempt to make meaningful for themselves (*Ars*.1.42). So, Echo may be seen in this role, bound to follow a script set for her by others - by the author and narrator of the *Metamorphoses* no less than by Narcissus. The linguistic restrictions placed upon her are, in this context, the same as those placed upon any lover who wishes to express their desire by using the words and phrases of love: *blanditiae* that may be at once highly charged with meaning and almost meaningless.[51]

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[49] On the elegiac and Callimachean 'echoes' in Ovid's representation of Narcissus - but not 'the hapless Echo' - cf. Knox 1986, 19-26. Knox suggests that: 'Ovid's portrayal of Narcissus is achieved by the deliberate reinterpretation of erotic motifs familar from the tradition of Augustan poetry.'

[50] The *praeceptor* also advises the lover to play the part that best pleases his beloved, mirroring her laughter, anger and tears (*Ars*.2.198-201). Continuing this elegiac role-play, when Echo is spurned by Narcissus - playing his role of the hard-hearted elegiac mistress - Echo is (literally) consumed by her unrequited love, her body becoming emaciated until only her bones remain. Cf. *Ars*.1.729, 736.

[51] As suggested by the *praeceptor amoris* in his presentation of the phrase 'tu mihi sola places' as a lover's 'script'. The words 'I love you', 'I do' may similarly be seen as either loaded with significance or as empty tropes.

Re-appropriation

From this perspective, Echo's echoes - her 'mimesis' in the *Metamorphoses* - might be viewed as an active gesture of expression and communication, rather than as a passive act of reflection. Her mimesis might be seen as an expression of her discursive power rather than her linguistic impotence. Echo draws attention to the *différance* of language by echoing Narcissus' words, re-appropriating them to a different subject position, relocating them in a different context, and so producing a different meaning. In this way, she demonstrates that 'the boundaries of context are always shifting: there is no ideal self-sameness which guarantees exact repetition of meaning.'[52] Indeed, it is the recognition of this potential instability and multiplicity of context, language and meaning which may be seen to distinguish the difference of Echo's story from that of Narcissus. For while the central motifs of the Narcissus story - the story of the boy who falls in love with his own reflected image - may be seen to privilege unity, univocity, identity, and symmetry, the story of Echo may be seen to resist these (linear) modes to privilege disunity, plurality, difference and asymmetry.

Received readings of the stories of Echo and Narcissus tend to unify the two narratives, to privilege unity and correspondence in their readings, to see the two narratives as telling one story. The symmetry that these readings posit, however, is not precisely balanced. This displaced parallelism or fractured symmetry is based upon the reflective 'nature' of both Echo and Narcissus and their individual stories. Although Ovid was the first to juxtapose their stories in this way, Lucretius in the *De Rerum Natura* had previously suggested the correspondence of the echo and the reflection in his Epicurean analyses of these natural phenomena, claiming that both are produced in a similar way by the 'reflection' or throwing back of omissions of sound and light.[53] The influence of Lucretius' description of these verbal and visual reflections upon Ovid's representation of Echo is particularly apparent. Lucretius not only describes the voice as possessing bodily form (*uoces uerbaque constent / corporeis e principiis* - *DRN* 4.533f), as Ovid elides Echo's *vox* and *corpora*, but he also claims that in consequence of this, a speaker may lose bodily strength - figured as a loss of the body itself - by speaking too much or too strongly: *nec te fallit item quid corporis auferat et quid / detrahat ex hominum neruis ac uiribus ipsis / perpetuus sermo ... / ergo corpoream uocem constare neccessest, multa loquens quoniam omittit de corpore partem* (*DRN* 4.535-7 ... 540f).

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52 Cornell 1993, 15

53 Cf. Lucretius *DRN* 4.98-109 on mirrored images, and 4.524-594 on echoes.

Re-appropriation

Lucretius' description of the echo as giving rise to country stories of nymphs and fauns inhabiting hills and rocky places suggests a similar influence upon Ovid:[54]

> quae bene cum uideas, rationem reddere possis
> tute tibi atque aliis, quo pacto per loca sola
> saxa paris formas uerborum ex ordine reddant,
> palantis comites cum montis inter opacos
> quaerimus et magna dispersos uoce ciemus.
> sex etiam aut septem loca uidi reddere uoces,
> unam cum iaceres: ita colles collibus ipsi
> uerba repulsantes iterabant docta referri.
> haec loca capripedes satyros nymphasque tenere
> finitimi fingunt, et faunos esse loquuntur,

When you see this well, you will be able to give
a reason to yourself and to others, how rocks in
lonely places may give back the same form of words in order
when we seek lost companions among the shady mountains
and when we call with loud shouts all around.
I have even seen places give back six or seven shouts
when only one was sent out: the hills passing on to the hills
themselves the reflected words, taught to come back.
In these places the neighbours imagine goat-footed
satyrs and nymphs to live, and there they say are fauns,

DRN 4.572-581

The echo given back by mountains and rocks, and the reflection given back by mirrors and pools are thus presented as different reflections of a similar phenomenon: the ability of certain surfaces to return (atomic) emissions of sound and light, and so to reflect an image of a voice or a person. The displaced parallelism and fractured symmetry of the Echo and Narcissus stories is thus drawn within an interpretative frame in which Echo and her voice are seen to parallel Narcissus and his image, in which *uox* and *corpora*, *forma* and *imago* are seen to be related and divided by a line of symmetry. On either side of this divide

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[54] In this account of the cause of echoes Lucretius alludes, albeit obliquely, to the traditional mythological association of Echo with Pan (*DRN* 4.586-90) - an association which Ovid does not incorporate into his aetiology.

Re-appropriation

Echo and Narcissus are seen to be related by a further series of reflections which order the narrative organisation of each of their stories, shaping their structure, themes and motifs. The stories appear to relate and to reflect one another in a mode of interplay that might be seen to reflect the dialogic interplay between Echo and Narcissus themselves. Thus, following the story of Tiresias and his encounter with Jupiter and Juno, the narrative begins with an account of Narcissus' background and *natura*, followed by a description of Echo's background and *natura* (her punishment by Juno), her desire for Narcissus, their unconsummated 'coming together' - the focal point of the relation between the two stories - and Narcissus' rejection of her. Echo's subsequent 'death' is followed by a description of Narcissus' desire for his own reflection (his punishment by Nemesis) and eventually his 'death'.

The stories of Echo and Narcissus are thus seen to balance and reflect each other by means of a 'displaced parallelism' rather than through a direct correspondence, their form or mode of symmetry appearing to mirror Echo's echoes rather than Narcissus' reflected image; that is, expressing difference no less than similarity. Within received readings, moreover, greater emphasis is usually given to the story of Narcissus at the expense of the story of Echo, producing a further plane of fractured symmetry at which these stories are seen to correspond, a plane in which and across which connections and parallels are incomplete and indirect. John Brenkman's reading of the two stories, however, subverts this image of symmetry. The emphasis of his reading, like those of other received readings of the two tales, is given particularly to the role of 'Narcissus in the text',[55] yet he views Narcissus and his story, not as the primary focus of Ovid's narrative, but as secondary reflection to Echo and her story. The representation of Echo, he suggests, 'centres the narrative system'[56] even though that narrative centre is displaced by its own self-reflexivity.

Brenkman offers one example of a reading of these stories which seeks to emphasise the features of difference within this displaced parallelism, and to highlight the elements of disunity and disruption which challenge the coherence of their narrative schemes. Brenkman begins his deconstructionist reading of the Echo and Narcissus stories as they are represented in the *Metamorphoses* with reference to the Aristotelian idea that narrative and textual unity is a necessary and desirable ground for narrative and textual coherence. Brenkman suggests that

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55 As the title of his article suggests. Cf. Brenkman 1976
56 Brenkman 1976, 309

within this model of (ideal) textuality, a unified and therefore coherent literary form is one in which '*mythos*, *dianoia*, and *ethos*' are appropriately combined and ordered. The inappropriate interplay of these textual features - of plot, character, and meaning - Brenkman suggests, may produce narrative and textual disorder but also a different form of coherence.

Brenkman offers an analysis of the different ways and means by and in which the narrative structure of the Echo and Narcissus stories may be seen to emphasise and exploit these elements of disorder, the different ways in which the text may seem to be open (and opened) to different readings and interpretations. His reading moreover - unlike the majority of received readings - elects to focus in particular upon the influence of Echo and her role as a potential agent of disorder and disruption in this narrative. Thus, his reading of the text may be seen to produce a (deconstructionist) reading which challenges and subverts conventional reading strategies based on models of thematic and structural unity, without reproducing a similar model. Brenkman offers a rereading of the text which privileges alternative viewpoints and disunified perspectives, but which does not produce 'a new unified reading or an alternative unity.'[57]

He thus resists the 'desire for mastery' of the text that other reading strategies yield to, resisting the desire to analyse and to represent the text and its reading(s) as part of any 'unified totality'. He claims:[58]

> A certain desire for mastery no doubt propels any reading of a literary text. Seeking theoretical foundation in the concept of literary form, the desire for mastery would be fulfilled at the moment when the literary discourse revealed itself to be a stable and coherent set of interrelated elements. Whether reached at a particular point in the reading process or held off by the temporal complications of a hermeneutic circle, the *telos* of the critical act has always been conceived as the apprehension of just such a unified totality.

Brenkman identifies a 'displaced parallelism' that relates but does not unite the stories of Echo and Narcissus, describing a parallelism that drives both characters to dissolution and death when their desire for another is not reciprocated, and when sexual union - the 'coming together' (*coire*) desired by Echo and the 'carnal

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[57] Cf. Culler 1983, 256
[58] Brenkman 1976, 293f

knowledge' prophesised by Tiresias (*nosse*) - unconsummated.[59] This parallelism, Brenkman suggests, is displaced by the different contexts in which Echo and Narcissus and their stories are located. Other than the fractured symmetry implied by Echo's association with verbal reflection and Narcissus' association with visual reflection, the symmetry of their stories is broken by a series of further differences, but differences which also indicate further parallels and symmetries.

Thus, although both Echo and Narcissus desire another, Brenkman emphasises the displacement of this parallel[60], his displacements in turn suggesting secondary parallels between the two. He claims that 'for Echo the other is another like herself' (that is, a reflected *image* like herself), while 'for Narcissus the other is his mirror image' (that is, another *like* himself). As expressions of likeness also signify difference, so expressions of difference also signify likeness, parallels highlight displacements and fragmentation highlights symmetry. Brenkman (similarly) suggests that a problematic difference distinguishes the deaths of Echo and Narcissus, and that the narrative marks the difference between the death of Echo's body, which she survives as a consciousness and as *uox*, and the death of Narcissus, which - Brenkman suggests - he does not survive.[61] Yet if Echo may be seen to survive her physical 'death' - the death of the *corpus* - and to live on in the form of a similar if not identical consciousness and voice, then so too may Narcissus be seen to survive his physical death, as a consciousness and as an image of his former self. For he is represented, even after death, as continuing to gaze upon his reflected image in the Stygian pools: *tum quoque se, postquam est inferna sede receptus, / in stygia spectabat aqua.* (*Met.*3.504f), his ending thus a reflection of Echo's in its continuity of his character and identity, if not his *corpus*.

Brenkman further suggests that the displaced symmetry between Echo and Narcissus as *uox* and *corpus* structures the relationship between both characters according to a familiar hierarchy: 'voice-consciousness (*uox*) / body (*corpus*) / reflected image (*umbra* or *imago*).'[62] Within the terms of this hierarchy, Brenkman claims, Echo represents 'the integral self, meaning, dialogue, life',

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[59] Cf. Knox 1986, 20 on Ovid's play in this narrative upon the amatory associations of *nosco* and *cognosco* in Tiresias' prophecy that Narcissus will live long and well '*si se non nouerit*' (*Met.*3.348).
[60] Brenkman 1976, 297
[61] Brenkman 1976, 297f
[62] Brenkman 1976, 308

while Narcissus represents the inversion of these forms, signifying 'the other, illusion, nondialogue, death'.[63] Thus:[64]

> Sexuality belongs to the body, and its non-satisfaction is tied to death. The unity voice-consciousness, however, possesses a life that is independent of the body, sexuality, and death. That is why Echo's feeling for Narcissus is pity not desire after the death of her body. As long as Echo lives within her voice, her speech occupies a position in this hierarchy superior to that of the body. Narcissus' reflection, however, is less than the body, derived from it, and already linked to death: it is the non-living representation of the body in a space external to the self. Thus, Echo's speech and Narcissus' reflection - the two forms of repetition situated within the narrative - are placed within a hierarchy on opposite sides of the body.

The order of this hierarchy, in which Echo is allocated a position of privilege, structures the displaced parallels and fractured symmetries which pattern the differences between Echo and Narcissus. Brenkman makes use of this structure to illustrate his central thesis that the narrative structure of this episode makes use of the differences and asymmetries between the stories of Echo and Narcissus in order to achieve its coherence as a narrative: in order that *mythos*, *dianoia*, and *ethos* may be unified effectively.[65]

Brenkman argues that in order for the interplay between *mythos*, *dianoia*, and *ethos* in the story of Narcissus to be coherent, Narcissus' impossible desire for his own reflection should be figured in the narrative as a punishment: his desire for a lover that he can never have 'carnal knowledge' of or 'come together' with, an appropriate reflection of his own rejection of the others who would have had such knowledge and union with him. However, in order for that punishment to be appropriate, Narcissus' rejection of Echo must be figured as the rejection of another like himself, another autonomous and fully realised character. As Culler's reading of Brenkman's analysis illustrates:

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63 Brenkman 1976, 320

64 Brenkman 1976, 308

65 Brenkman's analysis necessarily elides and occludes a number of potential 'displaced parallels' Further patterns of displaced parallels or fractured symmetries could be adduced here, such as Echo's role in enabling lovers to consummate their desires (*Met.*3.362-64) contrasting with Narcissus' role in preventing lovers from consummating their desires for him (*Met.*3.353-55, 402f): different roles which nevertheless preclude both from consummating their own sexual desires. Perhaps the most significant example of a displaced parallel which Brenkman omits from his analysis is the gender difference between Echo and Narcissus, and the different gender roles that they may be seen to play.

> Though Echo's 'voice' is only an empty, echoing repetition of Narcissus' words, which he mistakes for another voice, it is crucial to the thematic and structural unity of the narrative to suppress the fact of delusion and empty repetition by telling us that Echo's echoes *do* express her desire, thus restoring her voice, selfhood, and intelligibility. It is crucial, for if Narcissus' fate is to be an appropriate punishment, Echo must be a character who has exposed her desire and been rejected.

Echo's punishment by Juno - identified with Narcissus' punishment by Nemesis as one of the points of symmetry between the two stories - threatens to undermine Echo's status as an autonomous character: 'If in the words assigned to Echo there is a radical discontinuity between her speech and her mind, then her words, though readable, could not be read as hers. At an extreme, Echo would be unknown and unknowable, hidden behind the screen of words generated by others.'[66] Thus, it is necessary for Echo's punishment to be erased if Narcissus' punishment is to make sense; it is necessary for the parallelism between the two stories to be disrupted if their structural unity is to be coherent. Thus, (reading) order is produced from (reading) disorder.

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66 Brenkman 1976, 159f. Emphases in original.

Re-appropriation

Echo's echoes

We can appropriate; we can resist.
Amy Richlin, *The Pornography of Representation*

Transforming the mythological tradition in which Echo is a musician associated with Pan,[67] Ovid reconfigures Echo as a woman of words rather than of music, and he associates her for the first time with Narcissus rather than Pan. In the *Metamorphoses* the nymph Echo is always already a voice. Although the reader is assured by the narrator that, at this point in the story, Echo still possessed a physical form or *corpus* (*Met.*3.359), it is her *vox* which serves to represent her identity, and which threatens to compromise her identity. The image of Echo represented in the *Metamorphoses*, even in her corporeal form, is focused upon her voice.[68] She is introduced into the narrative as '*uocalis nymphe*' (*Met.*3.357) and as '*resonabilis Echo*' (*Met.*3.358), being identified primarily in terms of her relation to language and speech.

corpus adhuc Echo, non uox erat et tamen usum
garrula non alium, quam nunc habet, oris habebat,
reddere de multis ut uerba nouissima posset.
fecerat hoc Iuno, quia, cum deprehendere posset
sub Ioue saepe suo nymphas in monte iacentis,
illa deam longo prudens sermone tenebat,
dum fugerent nymphae. postquam hoc Saturnia sensit,
'huius' ait 'linguae, qua sum delusa, potestas
parua tibi dabitur uocisque breuissimus usus,'
reque minas firmat. tantum haec in fine loquendi
ingeminat uoces auditaque uerba reportat.
ergo ubi Narcissum per deuia rura uagantem
uidit et incaluit, sequitur uestigia furtim,
quoque magis sequitur, flamma propriore calescit,
non aliter quam cum summis circumlita taedis
admotas rapiunt uiuacia sulphura flammas.
o quotiens uoluit blandis accedere dictis

[67] Cf. Greenberg 1980 on the representation of Echo and Pan in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe.*
[68] This image is reinforced by the ambiguity of the term *ora* (*Met.*3.393) which might signify Echo's face or her mouth, emphasising the correspondence of her identity, appearance and voice in this narrative.

et mollis adhibere preces! natura repugnat
nec sinit, incipiat, sed, quod sinit, illa parata est
exspectare sonos, ad quos sua uerba remittat.

Echo was still body, not just voice and although talkative
had no other use of her mouth than she has now,
she could repeat only the very last words of many.
Juno had made her this way because, when she might have caught
the nymphs lying with her Jove on the mountainside,
she would cleverly hold the goddess in long conversation,
while the nymphs fled. When Saturnia realised this,
she said: 'That tongue of yours, with which I am mocked will be
given only limited power and the briefest use of speech.'
The event confirmed the threat. She only repeats the last
sounds that might be spoken and reports the words she hears.
So, when she saw Narcissus wandering through the pathless countryside
she was inflamed. She followed his footsteps secretly,
and the more she followed, the more she burned at his nearness,
as when torches, tips smeared with lively
sulphur, catch the flame that is brought near.
O, so many times she longs to approach with sweet words
and to bring soft prayers! Her nature forbids it and
does not allow her to begin, but for what it does allow, she is prepared
to wait for sounds to which she may return her own words.

*Met.*3.359-378

Received readings of the story tend to emphasise the restrictions that are placed upon Echo's speech, covering-up the possibility that she might resist these restrictions, that she might be another of the silent or silenced women of the *Metamorphoses* 'who continue to struggle to speak for themselves, to find new forms of language outside men's authority, and to find in their silencing new conditions of speech'.[69] They equate Echo's loss of speech with a loss of autonomy and identity, as Solodow illustrates:[70]

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[69] Birkett and Harvey 1991, 11
[70] Solodow 1988, 190f

> Life, or at least the life of an individual self, is practically co-extensive with talk. In Ovid's rhetorical view of life, discourse creates identity, and correspondingly, the failure of speech exemplifies the fact that the person transformed can no longer create his own identity or his present reality but becomes captured in the materiality of natural force.

Throughout this narrative, as perhaps throughout the *Metamorphoses*, language is figured as a mark of authority, and in particular as a mark of male authority. In the story of Echo, linguistic authority is emphatically male; language is apparently not only 'man-made' but is also initiated and directed by men. Thus, the story of Echo is seen to be introduced as a(symmetrical) supplement to the story of Narcissus (*Met.*3.339-510), a story which is itself introduced as a supplement to the story of Tiresias, narrated as evidence of the power and authority of Tiresias' prophetic skills - his linguistic authority. For Tiresias' ambiguously oracular declaration that Narcissus will live a long and happy life '*si se non nouerit*' (*Met.*3.348) provides the focus for the ensuing stories of Echo and Narcissus, his prophetic words and his authority ostensibly initiating and shaping the narrative which follows.[71]

Echo's powers of speech, even before they are curtailed by the authoritative figure of Juno, are apparently directed by Jupiter, on whose behalf she ostensibly distracts Juno with '*longo ... sermone*' (*Met.*3.364) in order to prevent her from discovering Jupiter's sexual indiscretions upon the mountainside. Subsequently, following Juno's punishment of Echo for this deception and the restriction of Echo's linguistic powers to the 'briefest use of speech', the nymph's powers of speech are seen to be almost entirely directed by Narcissus, who appears to initiate and order all of her words - to have complete linguistic power over her.

> forte puer comitum seductus ab agmine fido
> dixerat: 'ecquis adest?' et 'adest' responderat Echo
> hic stupet, utque aciem partes dimittit in omnis,
> uoce 'ueni!' magna clamat: uocat illa uocantem.
> respicit et rursus nullo ueniente 'quid' inquit
> 'me fugis?' et totidem, quot dixit, uerba recepit.
> perstat et alternae deceptus imagine uocis

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[71] The formulation of Tiresias' prophecy may be seen to predict not only a sexual dimension to Narcissus' story (cf. Knox 1986, 20) but also a 'literary' dimension. Cf. Barthes 1975 and Gubar 1982, 76: 'critics not infrequently write about the act of reading in sexual terms. A 'passage' of a text is a way of knowing a 'corpus' or 'body' of material that should lead us on, tease us - but too obviously. 'Knowing' a book is not unlike sexual knowing.'

'huc coeamus' ait, nullique libentius umquam
responsura sono 'coeamus' rettulit Echo
et uerbis fauet ipsa suis egressaque silua
ibat, ut iniceret sperato bracchia collo;
ille fugit fugiensque 'manus conplexibus aufer!
ante' ait 'emoriar, quam sit tibi copia nostri';
rettulit illa nihil nisi 'sit tibi copia nostri!'

By chance the boy, separated from the group of his faithful companions
had cried: 'Is anyone here?' and 'Here!' Echo had responded.
He is amazed and, casting his gaze in all directions,
calls 'Come!' in a loud voice: she calls the caller.
He looks behind and seeing no one coming, again he calls:
'Why do you run from me?' and again he received the words he had spoken.
He stands still and deceived by the image of the other voice
says 'Here let us come together,' and never to repeat another sound
more gladly, Echo replies, 'Let us come together!'
and to support her words she moves out of the trees
to throw her arms around the longed for neck;
but he flees from her, and fleeing says: 'Take your embracing hands away.'
'May I die before I give you power over me.'
She replied nothing except 'I give you power over me.'

*Met.*3.379-392

Narcissus' linguistic power over Echo is viewed, alternatively, as a reflection of the narrator's linguistic power, since it is he - as textual director of the narrative - who may be seen to initiate and direct the words of all his characters: a ventriloquist figure who places words in the mouth of Narcissus, who in turn performs the same act for Echo.[72] Thus, Segal suggests that in the 'dialogue' sequence between Echo and Narcissus:[73]

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[72] Evidence of the textual director at play is evident throughout the narrative and is not restricted to this dialogic interchange between Echo and Narcissus. Cf. in particular, the narrator's intervention at *Met.*3.432-36, and the 'echoing' lines at *Met.*3.353, 355: 'multi illum iuuenes, multae cupiere puellae / ... / nulli illum iuuenes, nullae tetigere puellae.' For general analyses of word play in this narrative cf. Knox 1986, 19-26; Solodow 1988, 46f; Tissol 1997, 15-17.
[73] Segal 1988, 7

> Echo's linguistic captivity is all the more pitifully emphasised; we are never unaware that the cleverness, assistance in her distress belongs to the narrator, who is duping her as much as Narcissus when he lets her pick up Narcissus' verbal leavings as the food and drink of her desire.

Yet this 'pitiful' emphasis upon Echo's ostensible linguistic captivity by the narrator figure is destabilised by its context. For one of the most significant aspects of the dialogue sequence between Echo and Narcissus (*Met.*3.380-92) may be seen as its illustration of the indeterminacy and fluidity of language and meaning, the ability of words to bear significance beyond that ordered by their producer, to mean different things to different people in different contexts. The dialogic interchange between Echo and Narcissus demonstrates that once produced - once spoken or written - it is impossible absolutely to control the reception and interpretation of words; it demonstrates that linguistic authority is only ever provisional and temporary.

Despite the emphatic authority and linguistic dominance attributed to male figures in readings of this narrative - to Tiresias, Jupiter, Narcissus, and the narrator - their authority is not, then, absolute and may be seen to be challenged by the female figures of the narrative - by Liriope, Juno, Echo, and the (woman) reader - whose discursive powers they would restrict. For an alternative reading of the story of Echo might see her story as introducing and initiating the story of Narcissus, and as therefore directing and shaping its narrative themes and motifs - in reflection of hers. An alternative reading might see the rationale offered for the narration of these stories not only as an illustration of the accuracy and authority of Tiresias' prophetic powers, but also as a challenge to that authority, presented in the narrative as a '*temptamina ... uocis*' (*Met.*3.341). Tiresias' oracular declaration that Narcissus will live long and well '*si se non nouerit*' - always already a response to the Delphic injunction '*gnothi seauton*' - is framed as a response to Narcissus' mother, the nymph Liriope, whose question about her son's future initiates and directs Tiresias' statement by challenging his authority to see and to speak of the future. It is Liriope's challenge, then, that may be seen to provide the focus for the ensuing stories of Echo and Narcissus no less than Tiresias' prophetic announcement. It is her challenge to his authority, her '*temptamina ... uocis*', which initiates and directs the following narrative.

An alternative reading of Echo's story might similarly emphasise the extent to which Echo employs her linguistic powers to challenge and to subvert male

authority while appearing to be directed by it. Her deception of Juno may be seen as an act of initiative and creativity rather than a passive response to Jupiter's directives. Segal, reflecting other received readings of the story, assumes again that Echo's linguistic skills and creativity (before her punishment) were directed by Jupiter and exercised only under his authority:[74]

> Echo once had creative power. She spun out the talk with Juno till the nymphs with whom Jupiter was dallying had time to disperse. Here, a woman was the catcher not the caught; but only to catch another woman, and on behalf of a man whose prey her sisters were. She appears to have had no part in the jovial sport but, parked as sentinel, marked the divide-and-rule of women. Echo's freest speech, then, was brilliant but obedient.

However, it is not obvious from the narrative that it was necessarily on Jupiter's behalf, 'on behalf of a man', that Echo distracts Juno with her speech(es). Rather, it is Echo's sister nymphs who are presented as the key subjects for whom Echo's deception of Juno bears benefit. It is not Jupiter who is represented as being at risk from Juno's detection, it is the nymphs who fear discovery *in flagrante delicto* - or *sub Ioue* - and it is they who take advantage of Echo's creativity to flee. Of course, Echo's efforts to protect her sister nymphs are also of benefit to Jupiter, but the idea that her long conversations with Juno were performed in obedience to Jupiter's directions alone is unjustified by the text. It might even be suggested, following the claims made by Jupiter and Tiresias in the preceding episode, that women experience greater *jouissance* than men, that it is the nymphs who receive greater benefit from Echo's creative powers of speech than Jupiter.

Echo's deception of Juno, then, is not necessarily ordered by Jupiter or directed by him. He does not figure as a speaker or interlocutor in this narrative and, without the opportunity to speak, he lacks the potential to assert his authority over Echo or any other figure presented here.[75] Juno's deception, it appears, is initiated by one female figure on behalf of others: a 'divide-and-rule', perhaps, by women and for women, rather than of them. For although Juno is a female figure, ostensibly like Echo and her sister nymphs, in this episode she is no 'sister': she may be seen to represent a masculine authority that distances her from Echo and the nymphs. As the wife of Jupiter, intent upon restricting his extra-marital *uoluptas*, Juno may be

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[74] Segal 1988, 6

[75] With the possible exception of the nymphs 'beneath' him (*Met.*3.366)

seen to represent the patriarchal institution of marriage, and her exchanges with Echo may be seen as an attempt to reconfigure the authority of that institution.[76] She is further distanced from Echo and the nymphs by the extent to which her (re)assertion of that authority appears to be predicated, not upon the restriction of men, but upon the restriction of women - and in particular, upon the restriction of female *jouissance.*

So, although Echo is punished by a female figure, her use of language, of speech is curtailed by and on behalf of an authority that might be characterised as masculine. Thus, Echo's linguistic creativity, together with her ability to initiate speech and her power to speak words of her own, is ostensibly brought within the jurisdiction of this authority as she appears to lose her own authority over her own voice. Yet although Echo is restricted to the 'briefest use of speech' and is limited to repeating the last words spoken by others, she may be seen to resist those restrictions and limitations, and to employ her former linguistic creativity in a new context. By the creative act(s) of re-appropriation and mis-appropriation of language, Echo adopts another's words, another's language, to speak for herself. As Echo responds to Narcissus she re-appropriates and revises his words in such a way as to make her meaning override his. Her responses impose a new and different meaning upon Narcissus' words, making them seem hers, and by seeming to become hers. Garth Tissol sees this act of revision as an act of forceful aggression:[77]

> For all the verbal constraint under which Echo must operate, she succeeds at making wordplay into an aggressive act: she robs Narcissus' words of their meaning ... Echo's pun-like wordplay expands each word's meaning far beyond the boundaries set for it by the original speaker.

By creative repetition Echo successfully speaks of her own desires and communicates her own feelings to the reader and to Narcissus - even when those desires come to contradict Narcissus' own. Caren Greenberg emphasises the radical nature of this act of linguistic metamorphosis:[78]

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[76] Cf. Hamilton 1982 on Echo as a figure of disruption in the 'symbolic' marriage of Jupiter and Juno.
[77] Tissol 1997, 16. Galinsky 1975, 55 sees Echo's re-appropriation of Narcissus' words as rather more amusing than agressive: 'her encounter with Narcissus is so contrived and so hilarious as to keep the reader from sharing too soulfully in her misfortune.'
[78] Greenberg 1980, 308

> The necessary ambiguity of language makes repetition an act of radical change: where once there was no desire, the words come to express desire. Where once the first person subject was male, it is now female. Language is not simply transvestite here, it is transsexual. That is, it conveys both male and female sexual desires and not merely male and female roles.

Indeed, this aspect of Echo's re-appropriation and rereading of Narcissus' words is significant. For it is the element of difference (and of *différance*) between the intended meaning of the (same) words used by Narcissus and Echo in their dialogue which enables Echo to retain and to represent an identity which is different to that of Narcissus. It is this *différance* which enables Echo to avoid being re-absorbed into and by the (man-made) language that she is forced to adopt, and which allows her to maintain and to indicate her individuality - her difference.

By her playful repetition of Narcissus' words, by her mimesis, Echo realises the potential *différance* of language, making different words mean differently when spoken by different subjects in different contexts. Although her word-play is based primarily upon the instability of personal pronouns, Echo's semantic creativity is not restricted to, or by, a 'self' reflexive mode. She is also able to make use of the semantic indeterminacy and potentially sexual connotations of the few words exchanged between herself and Narcissus. Thus, '*ueni*' (*Met.*3.382) as spoken by Narcissus, might suggest an entirely 'innocent' desire on Narcissus' behalf for Echo to 'come' to him. Interpreted and repeated by Echo, however, '*ueni*' might also (or rather) suggest a desire of a more sexual nature.[79] Similarly, '*coeamus*' (*Met.*3.386) as spoken by Narcissus, might suggest an entirely 'innocent' desire on Narcissus' behalf for them to 'come together'. Interpreted and repeated by Echo, however, '*coeamus*' might also (or rather) suggest, once again, a desire of a more sexual nature on Echo's part.[80]

Echo's echoes are only able to challenge the prior meanings given to words by Narcissus and to express her own different meanings because of the potential mutability and indeterminacy of signs - and of two signs in particular. Signs in language relate (to) a signifier and signified, establishing a connection and a disjunction between the two, asserting their correspondence and their difference in

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79 Adams 1982, 175f, notes the use of *uenio* as a sexual euphemism and observes that: 'A female, viewing herself as the goal of motion, would have used *uenio* of a man coming to her.' Cf. Ovid *Am.*1.10.30.

80 Adams 1982, 178f, notes similarly that *coeo* operates 'as the verbal euphemism *par excellence* for copulation, heterosexual, homosexual or bestial'.

a form of 'fractured symmetry'. The signs for self and other, the pronouns for 'me' and 'you', however, do not operate in such a way. The relationship to and between the signifier and signified which they determine is necessarily indeterminate. 'I' and 'you' are never grounded absolutely in an external referent, their meaning is only provisionally authorised (and authored) by the presently speaking subject.

Thus Echo is able (to seem) to speak her own words because of the indeterminacy of these personal pronouns, which alter their meaning in relation to the speaking subject and the subject addressed to allow Narcissus' '*me fugis?*' (*Met.*3.384) to be reversed and yet to maintain its integrity and coherence as a question when spoken by Echo, the 'you' of the original formulation becoming the 'me' of its response. Furthermore, as John Brenkman suggests:[81] 'By manipulating the repeated phrases and controlling the operation of shifters, the narrative turns the play of repetition and difference among signifiers into the emergence of a *character* by linking a proper name, 'Echo', to a set of signifieds.' Echo, it seems, is also a shifter.

In his account of Mikhail Bakhtin's 'dialogism', Martin Holquist suggests that these signs for self and other operate in such a potentially unpredictable and indeterminate way because, unlike other signs, they signify something that is unseen:[82]

> In the signifier 'tree' we see a signified tree. Most nouns work something like this, but not the pronoun for the self, for what 'I' refers to cannot be seen, at least in the same way that the word 'tree' enables us to see a tree.

From this perspective, it is potentially significant, then, that in her dialogue with Narcissus, where she appropriates and reconfigures his spoken signs for self and other, Echo remains 'unseen'. She hides in the trees, concealing her *os* in order to conceal both her 'I'dentity and her voice. When she does eventually reveal herself and is seen by Narcissus, he runs away from her, breaking off their dialogic relationship and ending the(ir) correspondence between self and other. Holquist emphasises the indeterminacy and mutability of the sign for the self, highlighting its potentially universal significance. He describes 'I' as a 'shifter', claiming that 'it moves the centre of discourse from one speaking subject to another, its

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81 Brenkman 1976, 303
82 Holquist 1990, 27

emptiness is the no man's land in which subjects can exchange the lease they hold on all of language by virtue of saying 'I'.[83]

Feminist critics, however, would challenge the idea of the universal significance of the personal pronoun. They might argue, perhaps, that its 'emptiness' is not a 'no man's land' as Holquist suggests, but is rather an 'every man's land', a space to which men have unlimited and universal access, but to which women are granted only provisional and restricted access.[84] Elizabeth Grosz claims that because of the position that is assigned to women in language, because of the position that is assigned to Woman in the Symbolic order, a woman does not speak or mean 'I' in the same way that a male speaking subject might:[85]

> In one sense, in so far as she speaks and says 'I', she too must take up a place as a subject of the symbolic; yet, in another, in so far as she is positioned as castrated, passive, an object of desire for men rather than a subject who desires, her position within the symbolic must be marginal or tenuous: when she speaks as an 'I' it is never clear that she speaks (of or as) herself. She speaks in a mode of masquerade, in imitation of the masculine, phallic subject. Her 'I', then, ambiguously signifies her position as a (pale reflection of the) masculine subject; or it refers to a 'you', the (linguistic) counterpoint of the masculine 'I'.

For Grosz, all women speak as Echo speaks, imitating and reflecting a masculine speaking subjectivity, speaking as and of an 'I' that is not identical with herself. For Grosz, all women echo and repeat a 'man-made' language, speaking - like Echo - in a mode of masquerade, a mode of mimesis. Yet, as Irigaray suggests and as Echo illustrates, it is possible that while speaking in this mode of masquerade, of mimesis, a woman may also speak for herself. She need not be entirely re-absorbed into her mimetic speaking role: she may also 'remain elsewhere'.

By speaking of her *jouissance* - once again, as Irigaray suggests and as Echo illustrates - it is possible for a woman to resist her passive position within language and within the Symbolic order, in which she is figured as 'an object of desire for men rather than a subject who desires'. By expressing her own desires, it

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83 Holquist 1990, 23

84 In this respect, Holquist's linguistic 'no man's land' would seem like Lacan's image of the Symbolic, to which women are similarly granted only provisional and restricted access. Cf. Butler 1993a.

85 Grosz 1990, 71-2

is possible for her to become a speaking and desiring subject and for her, thus, to express her subjectivity. It is possible for her to speak as an 'I' that is not a 'pale reflection of the masculine subject', to speak as an 'I' that speaks of and as herself.

However, this is not to say that Echo speaks without restrictions. In order to speak as a subject who desires, in order to speak as an 'I', Echo depends upon an object of desire, a 'you' to whom she can direct her speech and her *jouissance*. In order to speak of and as (her)self, she must refer to (an)other. In order to speak, Echo needs Narcissus. But Narcissus also needs Echo, for as Jan Montefiore explains:[86]

> the 'I' cannot exist without 'Thou' to hear and reflect it, for by itself the 'I' cannot even know what its boundaries are. But 'Thou' is, to the 'I', primarily a means of self-definition, reflecting 'I' back to itself.

This analysis of the (symmetrical) correspondence and inter-dependency of the relation between self and other further suggests why it may be that the language shared by Echo and Narcissus may be seen to reflect different meanings. Both Narcissus and Echo in speaking 'I' to the other hear the other 'reflecting' themselves, reflecting their meanings and their desires.

From this perspective, Echo's final words to Narcissus bear particular resonance. Rejecting her, Narcissus calls '*ante ... emoriar, quam sit tibi copia nostri*' (*Met.* 3.391), and in reply Echo calls back '*sit tibi copia nostri*' (*Met.*3.392). The expression is significant in a number of respects, not least of all because Echo successfully disorders the very grammatical structure of Narcissus' words, subverting the basis on which signs and signifiers operate and relate within the ordered system of language, to transform Narcissus' formulaic curse of rejection[87] into an offering. This final exchange between Echo and Narcissus also suggests the idea that, despite Echo's linguistic dependence upon Narcissus, he does not have absolute power over her: the power that he does have is given to him by Echo herself. Moreover, having offered this *copia* to Narcissus, and having been rejected by him, Echo is reduced to a condition of *inopia*, a condition characterised by lack and by want.[88] Without Narcissus, without another to speak to, to reflect herself and to be reflected by her, Echo herself reflects nothing more.

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86 Montefiore 1994, 101

87 Cf. Watson 1992

88 Significantly, *inopia* may also be used to refer to a speaker or orator who lacks material on or with which to speak. In the absence of Narcissus, lacking his words to repeat, Echo is indeed *inopia*.

ille fugit fugiensque 'manus conplexibus aufer!
ante' ait 'emoriar, quam sit tibi copia nostri';
rettulit illa nihil nisi 'sit tibi copia nostri!'
spreta latet siluis pudibundaque frondibus ora
protegit et solis ex illo uiuit in antris;
sed tamen haeret amor crescitque dolore repulsae;
extenuant uigiles corpus miserabile curae
adducitque cutem macies et in aera sucus
corporis omnis abit; uox tantum atque ossa supersunt:
uox manet, ossa ferunt lapidis traxisse figuram.
inde latet siluis nulloque in monte uidetur,
omnibus auditur: sonus est, qui uiuit in illa.

But he flees from her, and fleeing says: 'Take your embracing hands away.'
'May I die before I give you power over me.'
She replied nothing except 'I give you power over me.'
Rejected, she hides in the woods and covers her shamed face with leaves,
living from then on in lonely caves;
But although rejected, her love holds on and grows with grief.
Her constant cares waste away her poor body,
she becomes gaunt and emaciated and all the moisture
dries from her body into the air; only her voice and bones remain:
her voice remains, they say her bones were transformed into stones.
Still she hides in the woods and is seen no more on the mountains,
yet everyone may hear her: it is her voice which lives in her.

*Met.*3.390-401

The cause - and in this case the effect - of Echo's speech is her desire for Narcissus, her potential *jouissance*. When this object of her desire is taken away from her and the realisation of her *jouissance* thus denied, Echo has no further cause to speak. Her last sounds are not articulated, an echo of the naiads and dryads who also loved Narcissus and who grieve for his death with traditional laments,[89] their mourning here wordless: '*planxere sorores / naiades et sectos*

[89] Cf. Holst-Warhaft 1992 on the lament as a particularly appropriate vehicle for female expression, and as a predominately vocal but non-articulate speech form.

fratri posuere capillos, / planxerunt dryades; plangentibus adsonat Echo' - His sister naiads lamented / and offered their shorn hair for their brother / the dryads lamented; Echo returned their laments (*Met.*3.505-07). Yet their mourning for Narcissus is already but a reflection, an unspoken echo, of the lament already spoken (and echoed) by Narcissus himself, for himself (*Met.*3.494-501). Thus, repeating Narcissus' final farewell, Echo has the last word here - and continues to do so.

In part, Echo has the 'last' word - even though her speech is reduced to the status of mere sound (*adsonat Echo* - *Met.*3.507) - because her relation to language, her place in the linguistic hierarchy of the Symbolic order is secondary. Echo's responsibility is the reception rather than the production of language. Her position may allow her the re-production of some language, but her role is always that of a reader rather than that of an author. Echo's re-appropriation and revision of Narcissus' words may be seen as an act of rereading, of resistant reading. For if Narcissus is seen as a producer of language, an author, then Echo's responses may be seen as those of a reader: 'Echo's voice provides a new reading of his text.'[90] Echo may be seen to resist the original terms and conditions encoded in that 'text' and to revise them so as to make clear the active presence of her own 'consciousness.'[91] Echo's reading of Narcissus' 'text', then, may be seen as a creative, active form of reception and re-appropriation rather than as a sterile, passive form of reflection and repetition.

Echo, moreover, is a selective reader. She does not automatically repeat all of Narcissus' words verbatim. She critically and creatively reads Narcissus' 'text', revising, re-appropriating and re-producing only those linguistic elements which suit her own agenda and purpose. Thus, by rereading and critically 'editing' Narcissus' text, she turns his invitation ('*huc coeamus*' *Met.*3.386) into an acceptance ('*coeamus*' *Met.*3.387). She turns his curse ('*ante emoriar, quam sit tibi copia nostri*' *Met.*3.391) into an offering ('*sit tibi copia nostri*' *Met.*3.392). By creatively reading and revising Narcissus' text, Echo is able to exploit those features which are most appropriate to her aims and objectives, and to resist those which pose a threat to them: a model resisting reader. It might be observed that Echo is only able to succeed as a resisting reader of Narcissus' text, however, because of the particular formulation of that text. For although it expresses

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[90] Greenberg 1980, 305

[91] Cf. Fetterley 1978, xi. The move made by Echo is precisely the move that Fetterley describes as the central process of the resisting reader's reading strategy - as illustrated in chapter 2.

Narcissus' rejection of her, it contains nothing which Echo is unable to rework to her own purpose. A different text, encoding different formulations might not allow her - or the resisting reader - such discursive and interpretative freedom and might place greater restrictions upon her potential rereading and revisions.[92]

Echo's creativity may, perhaps, be contrasted with the lack of creativity, the sterility, that is associated with Narcissus in this narrative. Narcissus may be figured as an 'author', a producer of language, but he seems to understand the words that he uses and hears in their most literal terms. He is, thus, a poor reader, failing to read the wider significance of Echo's *verba* and, crucially, misreading the *nota* given by his reflected image.[93] He also fails to recognise, to read, the silence and sterility of the *locus amoenus* where he comes across his reflected image: the place, like his image, is lifeless and silent, a place where no birds sing, no springs babble, no breezes blow, and where there is no life, either human or animal to disturb the sterile silence (*Met.*3.407-19).

Caren Greenberg's reading of the Echo and Narcissus stories highlights the different roles that Echo and Narcissus play as readers and producers of language, suggesting that:[94]

> The myth can be interpreted as an example of the relationship between the textual *corpus* and the reading function. As the pages turn, as Echo's body disappears, as the text object loses its importance and the reading function gains priority, the reading replaces the text.

Greenberg's analysis is based upon the idea that the interplay in the Echo and Narcissus stories between *corpus* and *uox* may be related to an interplay in the narrative between the text and its potential readings. Echo, as we have seen, enters the narrative (literally) as *corpus* ('*corpus adhuc Echo*' *Met.*3.359), but is always already identified as and by her *uox* (as '*uocalis nymphe*' and '*resonabilis Echo*' *Met.*3.357, 358). She does not enjoy the carnal pleasures which her sister nymphs share '*sub Ioue*' (*Met.*3.363), but employs her *uox* to prevent Juno from discovering the nymphs engaged in this 'carnality.' Pursuing Narcissus secretly (*Met.*3.371) she hides her *corpus* from him, aiming to entice him to her with

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92 The successful readings of a resisting reader similarly depend upon the text which she elects to read, some allowing greater interpretative freedom than others. Reading resistance, like Echo's echoes, is not a universally useful reading strategy.
93 On the parallels between Narcissus and Pygmalion cf. Rosati 1983
94 Greenberg 1980, 306

words instead. When she does reveal herself and embraces him bodily (*Met.*3.389), Narcissus rejects her and Echo once more hides herself away in the woods and caves until her body wastes away (*Met.*3.393f). Finally, her body and even her bones disappear, leaving Echo no longer *corpus*, but only *uox*.

Throughout her representation in the *Metamorphoses*, then, Echo's *uox* is attributed greater significance than her *corpus*. Her ability to initiate speech is taken from her yet she continues to speak, her body wastes away but her voice continues to speak Indeed, the significance of Echo's voice and its role as a marker of Echo's identity in this narrative is emphasised in the punishment that Juno inflicts upon her. For, rather than inflicting a metamorphic punishment upon the nymph for her deceptions, rather than physically punishing Echo by translating her body into another form, Juno attempts to punish Echo by restricting the use (if not the power) of her voice (*Met.*3.365-69).

Ovid's revision of traditional mythological accounts of the story of Echo is also illustrative in this respect. Alternative versions, such as that by Longus, tell how Echo's body was torn apart by Pan's shepherds and goatherds as a form of punishment for her rejection of his sexual advances and her superior musical skills. The scattered pieces of her torn body are taken and hidden by the earth, and from each of these scattered pieces Echo's music and voice continue to be heard. In these accounts of the myth, it is Echo's body which is attributed significance over that of her voice: her voice is secondary to her body, emanating from it and dependent upon it as a physical presence even after its dissolution and physical 'death'.

In Ovid's revision of the myth, however, emphasis upon the materiality of Echo's *corpus* is replaced by an emphasis upon the function of her *uox*. This change in emphasis from *corpora* to *uox*, from materiality to function, may also be seen to mark a shift in emphasis from text to textual interpretation, from the authorial *corpus* to the critical *uox*. The *corpus*, this (reading of the) narrative suggests, is secondary in significance to the *uox*, the text is secondary in significance to its readings. It is only through its readings that the text may continue to assert its identity - as it is through her voice that Echo continues to assert her identity following the death and dissolution of her body. As the dialogic exchanges between Echo and Narcissus demonstrate, it is only through the readings of a text that the various meanings its signs encode may be uncovered and its potential significance realised. Without a *uox* to speak (for) it, the significance of the *corpus* remains unknown and unknowable; it is its readings which make a text speak.

Re-appropriation

The stories of Echo and Narcissus as they are presented - and read - in the *Metamorphoses*, then, may be seen as stories about reading and, with some revision and re-appropriation, as stories about reading resistance, about reading like a woman.[95] Their corresponding but disunified narratives are introduced by the story of Tiresias, the seer who claimed the ability to 'read' as a woman, but who interpreted female *jouissance* as a man, and whose (mis)reading and (mis)representation was punished by Juno: in this narrative, as in that of Echo and Narcissus, the body doesn't matter, and Tiresias' seven years in the body of a woman make him no less of a man. Tiresias, as seer and prophet, subsequently offers a pre-reading of the Narcissus story, the narrative unfolding to reveal the truth of his interpretation. However, it is not until the fate of Narcissus is reread and interpreted by others, by other 'readers', and their reading is seen to correspond with Tiresias' prediction, that the seer's reading is given credence as a reliable reading and interpretation of events (*'cognita res meritam uati per Achaidas urbes / attulerat famam nomenque erat auguris ingens.' Met.*3.511f).

Indeed, it is not until the flower that comes to replace Narcissus is recognised and interpreted as a sign of the boy that his story is given voice. For without the flower to signify his former identity, to serve as a sign to be read (and without readers to interpret its significance), it might be claimed that Narcissus' story would remain unknown and unknowable. As Brenkman suggests:[96]

> No one was present at the scene of Narcissus' death, except Echo, who cannot relate what she saw, since the limitation imposed on her speech prevents her from initiating speech, from saying what has not yet been said ... Nor can the circumstances of Narcissus' death be reconstructed, for when he died he disappeared from the scene of his encounter and his mourners find only a flower ...
>
> This flower is the only access, at the level of narrated event, to the drama of Narcissus, but it can have no meaning at that level since its significance emerges only out of the fabric of signs which play in the text. The flower itself is a sign, a substitution, '*pro* corpore,' '*in place of* the body,' and not the product of a metamorphosis.

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[95] However, this should not be seen as the unifying theme of the two narratives. There is plenty of material in both which has nothing at all to do with reading. Although, if it is possible for everything to be political, perhaps it is also possible for everything to be about reading?
[96] Brenkman 1976, 325f. Emphases in original.

The narrative, then, is framed by 'readers' who offer interpretations both before and after the story. Within the narrative, other readers and other readings operate: Juno eventually produces the correct reading of Echo's creative text(s), her long distracting conversations, and punishes her accordingly (*Met.*3.364-68); Narcissus (mis)reads Echo; and Echo (mis)reads Narcissus. Ordering the narrative, the narrator is also a reader who offers a rereading and a new interpretation of these stories, and beyond the narrative frame the reader reads. I read - reading like Echo, reading like a woman.

Chaos (theory) III: (In)Conclusion

Generally, concluding chapters attempt to tie down the unruly strands of arguments which have woven themselves throughout the book, in order to present an image of the overall conception of the book. This is not the aim of this conclusion ...
Sara Mills, *Gendering the Reader*

A conclusion suggests resolution - a form of definite closure. In the *Metamorphoses* there is no absolute conclusion, no such final resolution or closure. The author's final epilogue enacts closure by effecting a challenge to even the final closure of death (*Met.*15.871-879). In the end, chaos returns to the the cosmos - or, at least, demonstrates that it was and is ever present.[1] Pythagoras' philosophical discourse (*Met.*15.60-478) in the final book marks a return to the cosmic disorder and primordial chaos of the beginning: even the fundamental elements of earth, air, fire and water, are indistinct and in a constant state of flux - *nulli sua forma manebat.*

quae quamquam spatio distent, tamen omnia fiunt
ex ipsis et in ipsa cadunt: resolutaque tellus
in liquidas rarescit aquas, tenuatus in auras
aeraque umor abit, dempto quoque pondere rursus
in superos aer tenuissimus emicat ignes;
inde retro redeunt, idemque retexitur ordo.
ignis enim densum spissatus in aera transit,
hic in aquas, tellus glomerata cogita unda.
nec species sua cuique manet, rerumque nouatrix
ex aliis alias reparat natura figuras:

These things, distant in space, are yet all formed
from each other and fall back into each other; the earth set free
is rarefied into liquid water, the water thinned
becomes wind and air, and losing weight again
the thinnest air springs up as fire;
then they return again in the same order reversed.
For fire condensed transforms into compact air,

[1] Cf Tissol 1997, 195: 'By a strange paradox, chaos still prevails in the forms of nature, and its violence seems to become more deeply embedded in the cosmos with each new change.'

from air into water, and water compressed solidifies as earth.
Nothing retains its own shape, and the renewer of things
Nature creates forms out of other forms.

*Met.*15.244-253

The order imposed upon the primordial chaos by the *opifex* or *fabricator*, the boundaries and limits designated by him, are similarly shown to be unfixed and unstable, subject to their own shifts and changes (*Met.*15.262f '*uidi ego, quod fuerat quondam solidissima tellus, / esse fretum, uidi factas ex aequore terras;*'). As Sara Myers suggests: 'In the end, the cosmos, like Pythagoras' speech, is shown not to be rational, but rather a chaos, and thus both philosopher and poetic narrative are stripped of the power adequately to explain the world in all its arbitrariness.' Pythagoras' speech draws attention to the disorder of the metamorphic cosmos and offers a 'micro-cosmic' revision of the *Metamorphoses*.

For this woman, reading the *Metamorphoses* like a woman, rereading has implied a similar mode of disorder and re-vision: looking again at this text from different perspectives. Some of these perspectives have shown that the reader may resist the dominant reading(s) of a text and its reception, others have shown that she may revise such dominant readings, and others have shown that I may re-appropriate such readings for a feminist agenda. Each of these perspectives have been cast from different reading positions which emphasise the plurality and indeterminacy of texts and their readings.Their projected aim has been to explore some of the ways in which readers and texts may negotiate and re-negotiate the experience of reading - and in particular, the experience of reading 'as a woman'.

This experience has been figured, not in a mode of negativity - highlighting only the objectification, silencing and passivity of female figures and female perspectives in the *Metamorphoses* - but in a more positive mode - emphasising the subjectivity, speech and agency of female figures in this text. In this recuperative mode - in which the silencing and objectification of female characters are not ignored, but in which Ovid's male authored and male orientated text is shown to admit a variety of female perspectives - objections to the recovery and re-appropriation of such texts are refuted. Susanne Kappeler states her objections to the (feminist) re-appropriation of such texts thus:[2]

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[2] Kappeler 1986, 221f

> Art will have to go. The necessity of giving a voice to our female perspective, to female vision, understanding and critique is beyond question ... The committed intention of the feminist (or any other political) writer is irreconcilable with the attitude required of art and artists, that is, their irresponsibility towards political reality.

Yet, as the rereadings, re-visions and re-appropriations offered above may be seen to demonstrate: resistance is possible. Art and artists, texts and authors, are not immune to the forces of 'political reality', a point to which the author of the *Metamorphoses* might testify. Political readers and political readings can make texts and their authors, art and artists, (seem) politically responsible - and politically irresponsible. The woman reader, the female reader, and the feminist reader can look again at images of women - and of men - and make use of these images to express a female subjectivity and a female perspective, or, rather, to express a plural and varied range of different female subjectivities and perspectives.

The political focus and aim of these different perspectives - as adopted in the re-visionary rereadings of the *Metamorphoses* described above - has not been to produce competetive 'dominant' readings to replace other received readings of the *Metamorphoses*. Rather, it has been to disorder the very notion of dominant readings and thus to destabilise the authority attributed through such dominant discourses to the male authored 'master narratives'[3] that have shaped configurations of gender from antiquity to the present, the very master narratives, moreover, that have configured and reinforced stereotypical images of Woman as a figure of disorder, disruption and chaos.

However, this is not to say that such disordering perspectives offer points of view that are uninfluenced by tradition. Katherine Hayles, considering the question of why chaos - as a trope and as a theory - appears 'in the present cultural moment' to bear such significance for science and literary theory, observes that the model of chaos theory presents an image of subversive disorder while at the same time incorporating patterns of tradition and order:[4]

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[3] Cf. Jardine 1985
[4] Hayles 1990, 265

Chaos

> I conjecture that disorder has become a focal point for contemporary theories because it offers the possibility of escaping from what are increasingly perceived as coercive structures of order. But in privileging disorder, theorists cannot extract themselves from the weight of their disciplinary traditions, even if they want to ... Thus there arise complex layerings in which traces of old paradigms are embedded within new, resistances to mastery are enfolded with impulses toward mastery, totalizing moves are made in the service of local knowledge.

Disordering the system, it seems, is not escape from the system. Reversing the dynamics by which order is seen to emerge from disorder - as in the *Metamorphoses* where the ordered cosmos is seen to emerge from and to depend upon the disordered primordial chaos - theories privileging chaos and disorder appear to emerge from and to depend upon the structures of traditional theories privileging pattern and order. Moreover, as Hayles - and the *Metamorphoses* - suggests, the disordering principles of chaos, whether seen as trope or theory, may repeat the same form and formality of traditionally ordered disciplines, reproducing the very conditions that they would resist.

Operating under the influence of a similar dynamic, the re-visionary and disordering perspectives offered by contemporary feminism(s) might seem to be similarly ordered by the coercive structures of the very power based gender hierarchy that they would resist: *nulli sua forma manebat.* Thus, 'resistances to mastery' may be seen to reproduce other modes and forms of mastery as traditional, male orientated, patriarchal discourses are replaced rather than supplemented by different, female orientated, feminist discourses. Thus 'totalizing moves are made in the service of local knowledge' as one woman is seen to read, to write and to speak on behalf of all other women, her individual experience of living, speaking, writing and reading 'as a woman' represented as the universal experience of Woman. Even within disordering discourses and discourses of disorder appeals may be made to ordering systems and authority. The reader who reads the *Metamorphoses* as or like a woman appeals - if not necessarily to an authority of lived experience - to an ordered hierarchy of sex and gender, to patterns and positions that may be replicated and reflected. She may read this text differently, her reading may make a difference, but ...

Naso magister erat
Ars.3.812

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